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THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE FAMILY FARM IN THE REPUBLICAN VALLEY COUNTRY OF KANSAS: 1860 - 1960

by

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PREFACE

During the spring and summer I sometimes visit the small Norwegian Cemetery on a high hill overlooking a long view of the lower Republican Valley. In late evening a cool breeze always stirs the two pine trees which shade a few plots. Just south of the cemetery in a little ravine is a small pond surrounded with a few acres of unbroken prairie sod. On the rise beyond the ravine a few large trees grow around a field. They are the only markers of the original homesite of my Grandfather's homestead.

My Grandmother once told me that when she stood on the hill and looked southwest all she could see was prairie grass. An aunt told me of walking over the hills to a Post Office on the creek there. I can remember when a house stood just across the field to the west and now I can still see an old tree and a lonely lilac bush on the next hilltop where a few years ago a house and farm buildings stood. Of the ten houses I could see from this hilltop when I was a child, now only two exist -- but instead of the waving prairie grass which Grandmother saw in the 1870's, there are rectangles, and squares of growing crops and trees along the roads. A few miles distant the dark green of trees, with a water tower, tall elevator, and an alfalfa mill rising above them, define the area of a small town.

What are reasons for so much change in the Republican Valley in so short a space of time?

In 1960, 6 per cent of the workers of the United States were employed in agricultural productivity.[1] In 1950 the Kansas population was 52.6 per cent rural and in 1960, 20% of the labor force of the Kansas population was engaged in agriculture. In 1960 the population of the Republican Valley was 52,804 with 29,076 people in incorporated towns. Since only Concordia and Clay Center were large enough to be considered urban by census definition, the total of 11,540 inhabitants in other incorporated communities were considered rural. Thus 78.1 per cent of the population in 1960 were rural.[2] "The trend of percentage in Kansas population living on the farm has been strongly downward since 1920."[3] Despite the downward trend in rural population, the American farmer has produced a surplus of food in such proportion that its disposal has become a problem of prime importance in the national economy. Greater mechanization, technological changes, larger farms, fewer farmers but more farm production all suggest that rural population is still greater than that necessary to maintain the present high level of agricultural productivity.[4]

The United States has rightly considered itself a great agricultural nation, and in 1800 it was essentially rural, but by 1920 its population was more than one-half urban.[5]

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[1] Information Please Almanac, 1965, p. 599.

[2] U.S., Bureau of Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1960.

[3] Leo M. Hoover, Kansas Agriculture After 100 Years, Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 392 (Manhattan: Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science, 1957 August) p. 59.

[4] Ibid., p. 64.

[5] Ronald L. Mighell, American Agriculture Its Structure and Place in the Economy, for the Social Science Research Council with the USDA Agricultural Research Service and the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Census (New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1955) p. ix.

Obviously, this transition from rural to urban economy was a gradual process. When did this trend toward urbanization begin? Did it begin when Samuel Slater built the first textile mill in New England? Did it begin when the London Company sent an expedition to Virginia in 1607 in expectation of a profitable trade being established? As these first settlers soon discovered, it was necessary to produce food in order that the settlement might survive to produce the raw materials and other trading goods desired by the founding company of English merchants.

Out of this struggle of our forefathers to turn the vast wilderness into a productive land suitable for transplanting the civilization developed in Western Europe, grew an idealized picture of the pioneer farmer. In subduing the wilderness the pioneer farmers utilized or developed traits of character which enabled the American people to establish a republic based on principles of democracy. In 1921 James E. Boyle pointed out the relationship between democracy and the land, thus: "rural problems interest first of all from the national standpoint, since the quality of the democracy which composes our own great Republic depends so largely on the quality of citizenship found on the land." Boyle also felt that cities were recruited from the farm population so that the quality of urban citizenship was determined by the quality of rural citizenship.[6]

In the forty years since these theories were expressed, the composition of cities has changed. No longer are city dwellers transplanted from rural areas -- "Today's city folks are not exfarmers."[7]

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[6]James E. Boyle, Rural Problems in the United States, ("National Social Science Series"; Chicago: A.C. McClug Co., 1921), p. 1. p. 3.

[7]Ladd Haystead, The Farmer and His Customers, (Norman; University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), p. 73.

In America, a man could acquire land for himself and through his own perseverance create a home and a good life for himself and his family. This has been the ideal, the goal, the "American Dream", and, "A dream 300 years in the making dies uneasily."[8]

The fact that only 13.3 per cent of American workers are employed in agriculture does not mean that less food is produced, only that fewer workers have been needed to produce food. The pioneer farmer produced hardly more than enough for himself and his family. In the 110 years from 1820 to 1930, the productivity of the individual farmer doubled and in 1953 the productivity of an individual farmer was twice the 1930 figure.

Year		Number fed by one farmer in addition to himself[9]
1820	-	4
1870	-	5.1
1900	-	7
1930	-	8
1940	-	10
1953	-	16.9

In 1960 this had risen to over 26 persons fed by one farmer, an increase of almost four times over 1900.[10]

Ladd Haystead expresses this change of productivity as follows:[11]

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[8]Ibid., p. 69.

[9]Theodore Schultz, United States Agriculture: Perspectives and Prospects, A Report of the American Assembly Graduate School of Business Columbia University, Dec. 1955 (Harriman, New York: Arden House 1955) p. 40.

[10]U.S., Department of Agriculture, Agriculture and Economic Growth, Agricultural Economic Report No. 28, Economic Research Service, 1963, p. 18.

[11]Ladd Haystead, p. 7.

> But is is doubtful whether we provided for more than half a dozen consumers beyond ourselves. If that pattern were as general today as it was forty years ago the United States would be a nation of have-nots. We would be importing food today, or starving with our present population, for today each farmer is producing for 17 consumers. In fact if we had the technique of 1940, the then larger number of farms and farmers, and none of the technological advance of the last 16 years, we should be in shortage and the nation's food bill, it is estimated, would be 8 billion higher than it is.

The welfare of 13.3 per cent of our working population and the prosperous operation of the agricultural segment of our total economy is of paramount importance, since about one half of the goods and services that entered final consumption by 1955 had farm origins.[12] Agriculture produces not only the food which residents of industrial urban areas need and cannot produce for themselves but also furnishes raw materials used in many of the industries. Although the fortunes of agriculture and business are inextricably intertwined, each has been considered as a separate entity with opposing patterns of development. The farmer has remained an individual producer, while the manufacturer as an individual producer has gradually been supplanted by the corporation engaged in mass producing consumer goods.

In the mid twentieth century farming was suffering economic ailments in a time when general prosperity prevailed. America has focused its attention on "The Farmer." Who is the farmer? What is the family farm? Is this a way of life that is outmoded and should be abandoned? In the midst of plenty why does the farmer receive a subsidy from the American Government? What measures should be taken to insure a sound agricultural economy? What role should government play in the regulation of agricultural economy? Search for the answers to these questions has led to studies of the problem by various agencies and individuals.

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[12]Mighell, p. 10.

The Social Science Research Council with the USDA Agricultural Service sponsored a study by Ronald L. Mighell called, American Agriculture: Its Structure and Place in the Economy. This report concluded that power revolutionized agriculture and that technological progress made in 20th Century agriculture involved more capital input in farming. A modern farm should be considered as a biological manufacturing plant.

The farm factory is smaller than the average manufacturing plant or retail establishment.[13]

The American Assembly Graduate School of Business, Columbia University, prepared a report in 1955 entitled: U.S. Agriculture: Perspectives and Prospects. The report traced the changes in agricultural production in the 20th Century which have led to greater production and larger farms and smaller amounts of farming personnel. It offers the theory that, "Salvation of Model T farmers clearly lies largely outside of agriculture. Farmers on such farms must be aided to move to opportunities outside of agriculture."[14]

John H. Davis and Kenneth Hinshaw co-authored a study, Farmer In a Bussiness Suit, Published in 1957.

> This is a human interest story of one of the most important economic developments in American History -- the transition from self sufficient farming of the Old Homestead to the modern combination of agriculture and business that now provides our great abundance of good and fiber.[15]

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[13]Ibid., p. 47.

[14]Schultz, p. 30.

[15]John H. Davis and Kenneth Hinshaw, Farmer in a Business Suit, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957) p. ix.

In tracing the history of farming from early settlements, this interpretation also indicates that the application of power and technology have made it impossible for the small self sufficient farm to exist as it has in past history. However Davis and Hinshaw suggest that there is still a possible way for such small farms and farmers to function through such measures as agribusiness programs operated by communities not individuals, the location of small factories in depressed areas to allow farmers to earn additional income in such establishments, shifts of land to new uses, and incorporation of farms.[16]

Ladd Haystead wrote an explanation of the status of the farmer in modern agriculture entitled, The Farmer and His Customers. He also considered the technological advances, particularly since 1940, as the chief factor in creating food surpluses. In connection with this, the capital investment needed by a farmer has also increased. Therefore, in recent years, the small farmer has the highest risk factor in all history. Among the other surpluses created by technological advances are small farms and small farmers.[17]

Edward Higbee in Farms and Farmers In An Urban Age suggested complete abandonment of the family farm concept and allowing agriculture to become organized on the large scale pattern of the manufacturing industries of the United States.[18] Higbee believes that America has been too long influenced by the Jeffersonian theory that every family should own a farm as a basic ingredient of a successful democracy. We are clinging to that theory, while practice has

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[16]Ibid., p. 228-240.

[17]Haystead, p. 70-73.

[18]Edward Higbee, Farms and Farmers In An Urban Age, (The Twentieth Century Fund, New York: 1963) p. 5.

already converted the United States to a nation of industrial urbanites.

The Family Tenure Conference of the University of Chicago in 1946 reached the conclusion that the family farm was a "strong influence in the rural economy for the attainment of desirable objectives." This conclusion was made despite the fact that certain weaknesses (among which were lack of adequate capital, lack of conservation, and too large a labor force) were readily acknowledged, and that there were too many small units which were inadequate and a few large commercial units which seriously threatened the family farm.[19]

Horace Hamilton in the report of this conference made a statement which seems to typify the thinking of the conference. "The family farm is both an economic and a social institution. It does not stand or fall, therefore, on a basis of economic efficiency alone. It survives in part because it is socially efficient."[20]

Less than two decades later a similar conference, The Homestead Symposium at the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education, examined agricultural problems and progress.[21] The Symposium presented an historical survey of United States land policy and its effect on American agricultural conditions today. The various experts contributing to this study agreed that the family farm as it has been known is nearing extinction today. However, the proficient family unit need not disappear although over one half the present farm population is

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[19]Joseph Ackerman and Marshall Harris, Family Farm Policy, University of Chicago Press, Chicago: 1946.

[20]Ibid., p. 110.

[21]Howard W. Ottosin, Editor, Land Use and Problems in the United States, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1963.

unnecessary in agriculture if the family farm is to be a proficient one. John Brewster in one section of this Symposium said that the conflict is not between the family farm and a large commercial type operation, but between the proficient family farm and the idea of providing ample opportunities for farm people. 'This does not mean surrender of the family farm ideal, but it does mean that policies and programs to achieve it must be incorporated within the larger objectives of finding opportunities for farm people who are otherwise sacrificed by an overwrought dedication to the agricultural ideal of the proficient farms."[22]

In February 1963, NBC television showed a Huntley-Brinkley Report on the status of the family farm and the rural community. Kansas towns and farms provided the locale to show both the small undercapitalized farm and the more profitable family farm. The corollary to the premise that the small family farm is disappearing is that the small town serving and being supported by these small farms is also disappearing while certain strategically located towns in certain farm areas are in good condition.

In the 1960's Kansas State University initiated Area Development Studies with a view to providing basis for long range planning to utilize the human and natural resources of the state of Kansas. The very fact that such a study existed, indicated that the agricultural economy of the state did not offer opportunities to all citizens of the state.

There was one point of agreement among the foregoing studies of agricultural conditions; namely, there are more farmers in the United States than are necessary - current estimates set the figure at twice as many as needed.

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[22]Ottosin, p. 138.

Scientific advances and technological developments were cited as creating the situation in which less labor is required to produce more food and fibers than in previous eras. The Jeffersonian Ideal of a family farm as a foundation for a democratic society was discussed from various points of view. An abundance of available public land and the methods of disposal, particularly pre-emption procedures and the Homestead Act of 1862, were also advanced as reasons for the development in modern times of inefficient small farm units. Conclusions drawn from these findings were more varied than the evidence presented: (1) Steps should be taken to preserve the family farm. (2) Certain units are worth saving and the rest of the people involved in working family farms which were not practical should find employment outside agriculture. (3) The small family farm can be preserved by bringing farm related businesses to depressed agricultural areas to provide income through cooperative farm business enterprises within small geographic areas. (4) Factory type operation of farms should replace the family farm completely.

CHAPTER I

DEFINING THE FAMILY FARM

What is a farm? What is a farm? What is a family farm? Definitions of such seemingly simple terms which people use frequently should present no problem. However, in attempting to supply a sentence or paragraph which encompasses the complete meaning of the terms, the person defining them must soon become convinced that there is no precise statement which will be compatible with the varied interpretations.

Webster's New World Dictionary (college edition) lists five definitions of the noun farm and seven for the verb farm. According to the first definition a farm was "originally, a fixed sum payable at regular intervals as rent, taxes, etc. or an amount collected in place of taxes etc.; hence (b) the letting out, for a fixed amount, of the collection of taxes, with the privilege of keeping all that is collected; hence (c) the condition of being let out or farmed out at a fixed rent." Through modifications of usage the definition of a farm is also "a piece of land (with house, barns, etc.) on which crops or animals are raised; originally such land let out to tenants." The definition of the verb is simply "to cultivate land" and a second definition is "to collect taxes and other fees of a business on a commission or fixed basis." The original word from which our modern word farm descended had the meaning of steadfast or stable. The word agriculture is a much better term for it is derived from a Latin noun meaning field and the verb to cultivate.

In discussions of the farm in the framework of modern agriculture, it is possible to discard the meanings concerning the collections of rents and taxes. There does seem to be a certain trend in public opinion today that the subsidy payments made to farmers by the government does constitute a "collection of

taxes at a fixed rate." The derivation of the word does reflect the changes which have occurred in farming. The original implication was that farmers were tenants working the land in contrast to those who owned the land who were not farmers.

During the Middle Ages in Western Europe, feudalism coupled with the manorial system operated on the principle that the man who tilled the soil belonged to the land, while the owner of the land fulfilled his obligation of ownership by protecting the tiller of the soil. Even after the disintegration of the feudal system, the man who actually tilled the soil remained primarily a tenant with much of the land under the control of large land owners. The motivating force which impelled many settlers to come to the New World was the desire for economic betterment, to be accomplished through the ownership of land. This same motivating force also played a role of importance in settling the United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific. As our country developed there also grew the theory that democratic ideals were fostered and grew best when people were farmers and that it was the source of our strength as a democratic society. It seems to bring the meaning of the word farm in a full circle to the original source word which meant steadfast and stable.

The United States Census Bureau has used various definitions in delineating what the census taker should use as a basis for collecting agricultural statistics. Census definitions all include both area and value of products as a basis of deciding what is or is not a farm. A minimum of three acres may be considered a farm while a maximum size may be all land under the control of one person or partnership. Whether the land is owner or tenant operated is not a qualifying factor in determining whether a unit of land is considered a farm.

In the current census statistics farms are described in various ways to

present the pertinent information. Farms are classified according to size, tenure of operator, crops, and by economic class. The economic classes are called commercial and other farms, with the commercial classes divided into six subdivisions and the remaining farms have three subdivisions. The six groups of commercial farms are divided according to the value of products, number of days farmer worked at non-farm jobs, and the value of the farm products.[1]

A farm is a unit of land used for the production of food and fiber and the farmer is the person who operates such a unit. What is a family farm? What limitations or characteristics set it apart from the general definition of a farm? Is ownership a prerequisite for a family farm? Does size become a factor? Does the type of crop or crops produced or the value of such produce designate a farm as a family farm?

Historically, the family farm has been basic in the economy of the United States since the inception of government under the Constitution. Thomas Jefferson felt that if every man were educated, owned and lived on a farm, this would be the ideal method of fostering democracy and achieving a stable prosperous economy. In Jefferson's day the yeoman farmer was the operator and owner of a farm and in complete control of all factors of production. His operation closely approximated self-sufficiency. Application of the "Jeffersonian Ideal" as a measuring stick for a definition of a modern family farm, in spite of all the technological and scientific changes since the early 1800's, and the fact that there is no "typical" American farm creates diversity of opinion in defining this term.

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[1]U.S., Department of Commerce, United States Census of Agriculture, Kansas Counties, 1960, Vol. I, Part 21, pp. xxiiixxiv.

John W. Brewster, an agricultural economist with the Economic Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture prescribed the definition that, "family farm is an agricultural business in which the operating family does most of the work and is manager of ongoing operations of a business as well as a risk taker in the outcome (financial returns) of a business venture."[2] Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman used this same basic principle in defining a family farm as, "an agricultural business in which the operating family manages the operations, does most of the work, takes the risk and keeps the rewards." Further limits on the definition of a family farm have been set by the USDA that it uses no more than 1.5 men years of hired labor.[3]

At a Family Tenure Conference at the University of Chicago in February 1946, a definition of a family farm was essentially the same as Brewster defined it in 1962. "A family farm is one in which the four factors (land, labor, capital, and management) reside wholly within the family that works the land."[4] An elaboration of this definition includes:

1. The entrepreneurial functions vested in the farm family.
2. The human effort required to operate the farm provided by the farm family with the addition of such supplementary labor as may be necessary, either for seasonal peak loads or during

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[2]Howard W. Ottosin (ed.), Land Use Policy and Problem in the U.S., University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1963, p. 87. The Relevance of the Jefferson Dream Today, pp. 86-135.

[3]Dick Seim et. al., "Today In Central States", Farm Journal, August 1, 1963, (Vol. LXXXVII, No. 8) p. 10.

[4]Joseph Ackerman and Mildred Harris, ed., Family Farm Policy, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p. 7. Family Tenure Conference University of Chicago, February 15-20, 1946.

transitional stages in the family itself. (The amount of regular outside labor should not provide a total labor force in excess of that found to be in the family of "normal size in the community.")

3. A farm large enough, in terms of land, capital, modern technology, and other resources, to employ the labor resources of the farm family efficiently.[5]

However, four members of this nine member committee entered a dissenting opinion concerning this definition accepted by the majority of the committee. The definition of Henry C. and Anne Taylor was, "If the family occupying a farm is dependent for a living primarily upon the outcome of the farming activities, if the farm family participates in the planning of the year's work and is responsible for the day-to-day operations, and if a major part of the work is performed by the family, we would classify that farm as a family farm."[6]

Another member of the committee, J. I. Falconer, modified the definition to the extent of including those farms where at least one half of the labor required is provided by operator and his family.[7] J. F. Boothe also presented a minority report holding that the term, family farm, should "describe a system or method of operation one in which the factors of production are substantially combined in, controlled and applied by the family with in some instances, additional help." He suggested further classification into subgroups to utilize such criteria as income, efficiency, size, and labor force.[8]

Former Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson used the term family farm

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[5]Ibid., p. 389.

[6]Ibid., p. 403.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., p. 404.

numerous times in a book explaining his views on the course American agriculture should follow without a precise definition of the term. He wrote that half of the farms were commercial farms and practically all of these are family farms. However, he offered no explanation of what made the difference between the family commercial farms and those which are not family farms.[9]

Edward Higbee, agricultural expert and author of a recent Twentieth Century Fund report, discussed the demise of the family farm, but offered no definition for the term. Still, his use of such terms as "small", "inadequate", "sub-standard", "undercapitalized", "mythological", "dependent on family labor", created a descriptive picture of a modern family farm.[10]

While all these definitions vary in some degree, they are all in agreement on two points: (1) the farm family must furnish labor for the farming operation (2) the farm family manages the farming operation. Therefore the following definition is based on these two factors: A family farm is an agricultural unit from which a family derives its income by controlling the factors necessary for this unit to produce food and fiber and by personal participation in the activities necessary for production.

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[9]Ezra Taft Benson, Farmers at the Crossroads (as told to Carlisle Bargeron) Devon Adair Company, New York, 1956, p. 7.

[10]Edward Higbee, Farms and Farmers in an Urban Age, The Twentieth Century Fund, New York, 1963.

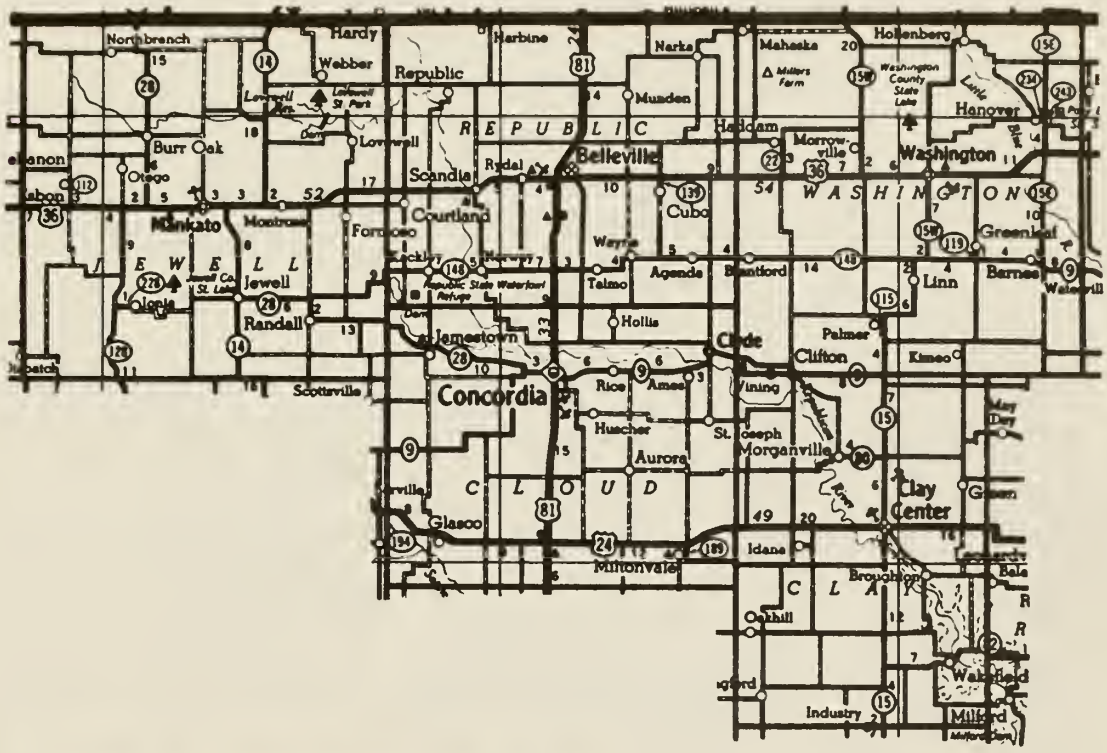

FIGURE 1. Lower Republican Valley.

CHAPTER II

THE KANSAS REPUBLICAN VALLEY COUNTIES: BACKGROUND

The choice of a geographic unit for the study of changes in the status of farm families during the century from 1860 to 1960 involves several factors-climate, soil, natural resources, type of settlement, and the people who inhabit the area. A unit composed of the counties lying wholly or in part within the Republican Valley in Kansas has a homogeneous quality with reference to these factors.

The Republican River rises in the northeastern corner of Colorado and flows in a northeasterly direction through the northwest corner of Kansas into Nebraska and turning south re-enters Kansas in northeast Jewell County. From this point to the mouth of the Republican River in Geary County, the Lower Republican Valley includes territory in Jewell, Republic, Cloud, Clay, Washington and Geary Counties. Geary County is excluded from this study because its resources, settlement, and development bear a closer relationship to the Smoky Hill and Kansas River Valleys than to the lower Republican area. Conversely, Washington County, whose territory is largely the hill land dividing the Blue and Republican Valley, is included because of the similarity of development to the other counties in the Valley. Part of Cloud County is drained by the Solomon branch of the Smoky Hill River, but its settlement and farming operation are identified with the Republican Valley. Jewell County, though touched only briefly by the Republican River, is chiefly made up of creek valleys tributary to the Republican. Republic and Clay Counties can be considered as lying totally within the confines of this Valley. A similarity of the natural features of this area show it to be a cohesive unit.

The natural regions of Kansas are the Ozark Plateau, the Central Lowlands,

and the Great Plains. The Ozark Plateau is only a small portion of the southeast corner of the state and most of the eastern third of the state is called the Central Lowlands. The remaining two thirds of the state is known as the Great Plains. A subdivision of the Great Plains, the western third of the state, is identified as High Plains. The boundary of the Central Lowlands is on a line running north and south through the mid-portions of Clay and Washington Counties and the Great Plains area includes the western part of the Republican Valley. Because of the general character of these major divisions, it is necessary to subdivide the area into smaller natural areas. The portion of Clay and Washington Counties lying within the Central Lowlands is known as the Flint Hills, while the rest of the unit is the Smoky Hills area of the Great Plains. Since natural features do not often change abruptly from one type to another, there is little difference between these two regions where one gradually blends into the other. A perceptible difference of regional type is very slight between the eastern edge of this five-county area and its western extremity.

The soil zones in Kansas follow the same lines as the natural regions. The Smoky Hills region is black or Chernozern soil while the Flint Hills region is chiefly prairie soil. The black soil is the most fertile, while prairie soil nearly equals it in fertility and either type is excellently suited to agricultural use.[1]

The average annual precipitation of this area is between 24 and 28 inches, with western Jewell County area in the lowest rainfall range, while only the part of Clay County nearest the mouth of the river can expect a minimum average

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[1]O. W. Bidwell, Major Soils of Kansas, Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station, 1962, Bulletin 302.

precipitation of 28 inches. The growing season for this area averages 170 to 180 days annually, while the northern tier of townships in the counties bordering Nebraska can expect some growing seasons as low as 160 days.[2] The natural vegetation of the area is grass with deciduous trees growing only along streams. The kind of grass varies from Bluestem in the Flint Hills area to short grasses in the western edges of the area, with combinations of both types throughout the area. Buffalo and gramma grasses predominate the native pastures of western Jewell County.[3]

The elevation of this area averages 1000 feet above sea level. Small areas within the limits of the five counties do rise as high as 2000 feet, but only as a small portion of the larger area. The local relief of the hills in this area is in most instances 100 feet, and no bluffs rise abruptly more than 300 feet. This geographic picture of the Lower Republican Valley is based on statistical averages. As is true of any average, the range of variations which must be averaged is not indicated.[4]

The Lower Republican Valley can expect an average annual rainfall of twenty-eight inches. However, as in other phases of Kansas Climate the average is not derived from a narrow range of fluctuation, but is derived from a broad range of a low of thirteen inches a year to a high of forty inches per year. The overall picture of climate in the Republican Valley follows a pattern of wet and dry periods that is characteristic of the state as a whole. There have been four exceptionally dry cycles, namely: (1) October 1859 to March 1868,

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[2]S. D. Flora, Climate In Kansas, p.

[3]Huber Self, Kansas Geography, Harlow Pub. Co., Oklahoma City, 1959, p. 23.

[4]Ibid., pp. 24-29.

(2) the early 1870's, (3) 1910 to 1917, (4) 1930's. These periods have been punctuated by floods in excessively wet years. The most memorable floods in the Republican Valley occurred in 1903, 1915, 1935, 1950, and 1951. During the 1940's local flooding plagued farmers of various parts of the valley almost annually.[5]

Swarms of migratory grasshoppers further complicated the drought of the 1870's devastating the crops at a crucial period in the development of the valley. Enormous increases in the grasshopper population during the drouth years of the 1930's created additional problems for local farmers. The driest season on record between 1887 and 1960 was 1936 with the average annual rainfall as follows:[6]

Jewell County	-	12.38
Republic County	-	19.31
Washington County	-	18.64
Cloud County	-	16.02
Clay County	-	17.23

Many farmers recall that year as one in which no rain fell. To the farmer who watched his corn dry up and eventually disintegrate into little brown mounds in the furrows, it was easy to remember the scattered showers as no rain at all despite the fact that they may have totalled as much as fifteen inches when added together.

Another facet of Kansas climate is the frequency of hail. This phenomenon is a storm of small breadth and while devastating to individuals, does not often affect areas more then a mile or so in circumference. Around the 100th meridian these storms occur most frequently in May and June, the most critical

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[5]Flora, Climate in Kansas, p.

[6]Ibid.

months in the growing period of most area crops.

The rainfall in the Republican Valley while not as extensive as in farming areas farther east is concentrated at the time of the season most suitable for the cultivation of corn and wheat, the principal crops of the area. Both crops are grown in combination with other grains and livestock, while the emphasis is on corn in the northern portion of the area and wheat in the south.

Fertile soil suitable for agricultural activity is the chief natural resource of the Republican Valley. Despite the hopes expressed by early settlers for the profitable exploitation of salt and coal deposits within the area, no such commercial enterprises have developed.[7] A forty-two inch vein of coal was reported discovered in Clay County in 1886.[8] However, today local residents can recall no mining activity, except to say that they believed some farmers have mentioned using some native coal as heating fuel in their homes. A study of the valley made by the United States Army Engineer for the purpose of evaluating the construction of a dam at Milford on the Republican River concludes,[9]

> Income in the area has always been basically agricultural and will remain so with water from construction of the Milford Reservoir and others in the area will be used for irrigation purposes primarily.

At the present time only two mineral industries exist within the Valley. One of these is a clay products plant (Cloud Ceramics) and the other a building

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[7]Mrs. E. F. Hollibaugh, Biographical History of Cloud County, Kansas, p. 118

[8]Kirke Mechem (ed.), Annals of Kansas, Volume 1, p. 20.

[9]State Water Plan Studies Part I, Preliminary Appraisal of Kansas Water Problems Sec. 9, Lower Republican Unit, Kansas Water Resources Board, June, 1961. p. 21.

stone quarry in Cloud County. Lignite, gypsum, sand, and gravel are other minerals found in the area, but none have been employed to any large extent in commercial enterprises.[10]

All of the counties in this study were organized within the space of one decade- from 1860 to 1870 -with most of the settlement occurring immediately following the Civil War. The Homestead Act of 1862 brought many settlers to the Republican Valley who took advantage of its provisions for free land. A tide of settlers moved up the river valley and the tributary creek valleys during this period and spread throughout the area in sufficient numbers to become organized formally into five counties. Washington County, the first organized, did vary slightly from this general pattern. The northeast corner of this county was a part of the trail through Kansas to western settlement of the United States. The Oregon Trail and later the Pony Express crossed this area. A less frequently used route, called the Mormon Trail, went up the Republican Valley. It should not be confused with the more extensively used Mormon Trail out of Omaha.

In Washington County these early trails attracted enough settlers so that an unsuccessful attempt was made to organize formal county government in 1855. Five years later in 1860 Washington officially become a county.

Little or no settlement took place during the Civil War and in some instances settlements even lost population. For example in 1860 there were eleven families in Wakefield, Clay County, and in 1863 there were only two men left. Clay County sent 47 men to the service in the Union Army and since the

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[10]Grace Muilenburg, The Kansas Scene, State Geological Survey of Kansas University of Kansas, Lawrence.

official population of the area in 1860 was one hundred sixty people, it becomes obvious that population growth was slow before the end of the hostilities.[11]

Clay and Cloud Counties were both organized in 1866, while Republic county followed in 1867 and Jewell County achieved a formally organized status in 1870.

Formal organization of the Republican Valley Counties was completed by 1870; however, this merely indicated that local governments had been established. The Gazeteer and Directory of Kansas, published in 1870, lists only nine settlements with post offices in the area. Washington, county seat of Washington County, was the largest of these communities and its population was only listed as 400.[12] The official population according to U. S. Census of 1870 was:[13]

Clay County	-	2,942
Cloud County	-	2,323
Jewell County	-	207
Republic County	-	511
Washington County	-	2,771

Most of the people who came to this area, came alone or in family units rather than in groups to settle at a site selected by an organized colony. Many of the individuals after 1870, were ex-Union soldiers taking advantage of the special dispensations for them in the Homestead Act. Most of the settlers were of native American stock chiefly from the Ohio Valley although the

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[11] Frank W. Blackmar, A Cyclopedia of State History, A Standard Publishing Co., Chicago, 1912, p. 363.

[12] Gazeteer and Directory of State of Kansas, Blackburn and Co. Lawrence, Kansas, 1870, p. 268.

[13] United States Census, 1870.

people represented many Northwest European countries as well as American citizens.[14]

By 1880 the population of these counties shows an impressive 860% increase in ten years to reach the following totals:[15]

Clay County	-	12,320
Cloud County	-	15,343
Jewell County	-	17,475
Republic County	-	15,725
Washington County	-	14,107

A population peak was recorded in the year 1890 and from then on until 1960, the decennial census recorded a steady decline. Population figures after 1890 would tend to indicate that small farm units of land were consolidated into larger units and that the business in towns could not be supported as first organized. The Water Plan Studies, Section 9 of the Kansas Water Resources Board Lower Republican Unit is almost an identical area with the one in this study. The plan noted this decline and placed the peak population figure for the Valley at 62,000 in 1900 with 41,600 in 1960. The Resources Board used the watersheds of the Valley to bound its study while this study is using the political boundaries of the five counties. Therefore, difference in peak year population in two studies can be accounted for by this slight difference in boundaries of the two areas. By projecting the rate of decline, the engineers of the project expect the population in the area to decline by 1975 to 40,000 with the rural population decreasing steadily to approximately 15,000 with the urban areas to continue on a slight uptrend to 25,000.[16]

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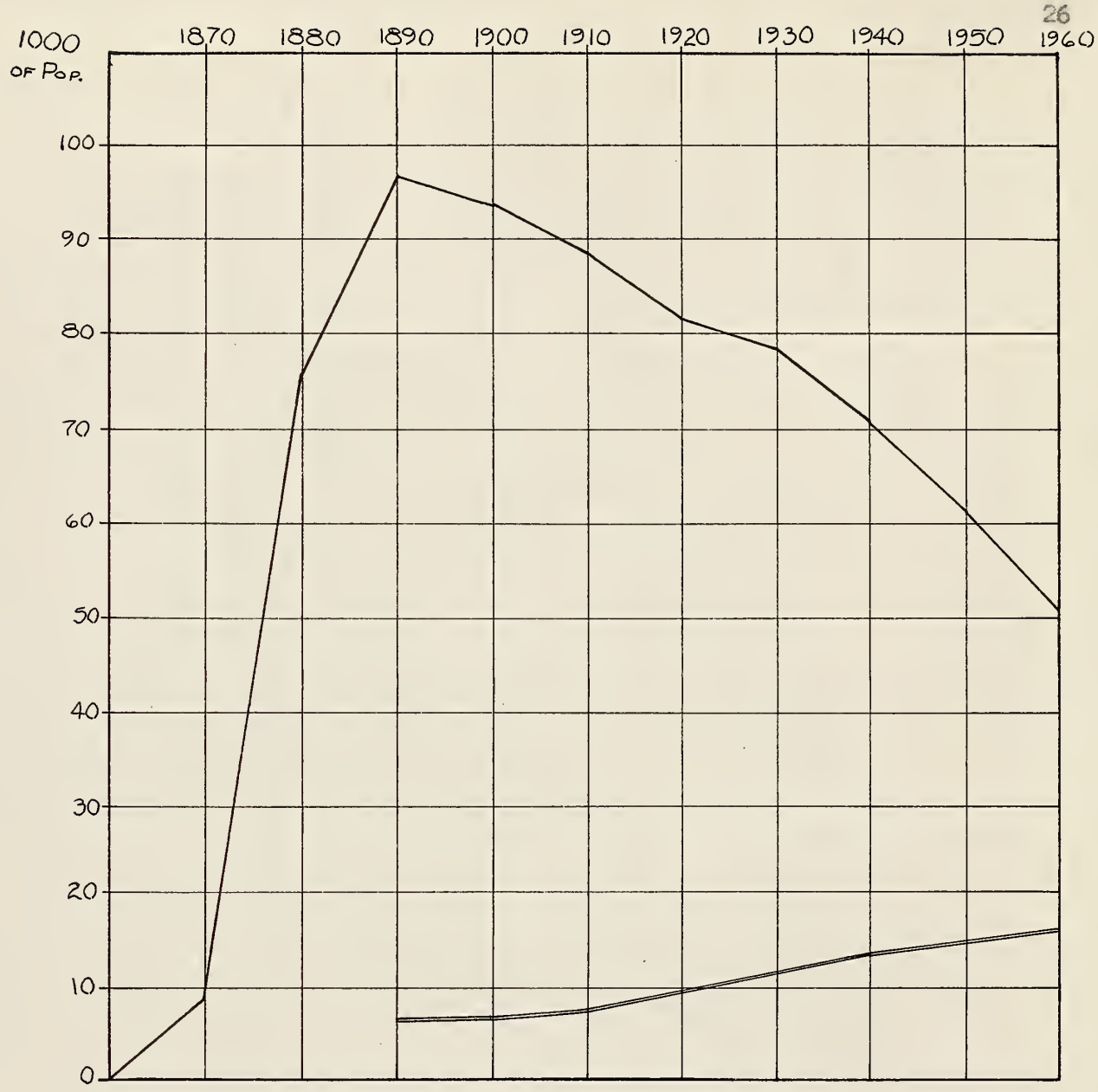
[14]Caroll D. Clark, and Roy L. Roberts, People of Kansas, The Kansas State Planning Board, Topeka, Kansas, 1936, pp. 49-61.

[15]United States Census, 1880.

[16]State Water Plan Studies Part I Preliminary Appraisal of Kansas Water Problems Sec. 9 Lower Republican Unit, pp.22.



Total population

Urban population (over 2500)

FIGURE 2. Population growth in Jewell, Republic, Washington, Clay, and Cloud Counties.

CHAPTER III

THE HISTORICAL SETTING

The Republican River is a part of the Kansas River system at times referred to as the Republican Fork of the Kansas. The Indians of the Pawnee Republic dominated this valley and the early explorers of the area chose to give the Indian name to the River. In 1806 Captain Zebulon Pike entered the valley and established contact with the Pawnee Indians at one of their chief villages. Finding that the Spanish had preceded him and had persuaded the chief to fly the flag, he somehow convinced the chief to exchange the Spanish flag for an American flag. The Pawnee Republic Historical Society, in 1896, reached the conclusion that this village was in White Rock Township in Republic County.[1] More recent research has definitely placed the location of the village in Nebraska, however, Republic County may claim the sites of less historic Pawnee villages.

Zebulon Pike referred to Kansas as a desert and claimed it to be unfit for habitation. Stephen Long further perpetuated the idea of a barren waste by calling it the Great American Desert. Although the Republican Valley is east of the area they designated, it has been included in the general category. During the years immediately following Pike's exploration, the area was regarded simply as a place to get across in order to reach the more profitable areas. Trails were established through Kansas to the southwest to carry on a lucrative trade with the Spanish and Mexicans in New Mexico. Expeditions to engage in trapping and in trading for furs travelled westward up the Missouri

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[1]Isaac O. Savage, A History of Republic County Kansas, Beloit, Kansas, Jones and Chubbins Art Printers, 1901, p.15.

River and its tributaries to reach the Rocky Mountains. Although the Republican River Valley was not a commonly travelled route for the western explorers and traders, a portion of the Bonneville fur trading and exploring party under the guidance of Captain Walker did travel by this route. Zenas Leonard, a fur trapper, who had been employed by Captain Bonneville, was with this group and wrote an account of his adventure after his return to his native state of Massachusetts in 1835.[2]

> We continued on our westward journey, up the fork of the Kansas River, passing through these prairies, till the 20th of June, when we happened on another tribe of Indians, called the Otoes, from whom we obtained a quantity of sweet corn and some wild turnips; we also understood from this tribe that it was much farther to the buffaloe [sic] country than we had anticipated, and that game in that direction was scarce. From thence we proceeded on in a Northwest direction, up the Republican Branch finding but very little game; and on the 21st of June we killed our last beef, which was equally divided among the mess.

For a month they traveled in the Republican Valley almost starving to death, because hunters were unable to find game. Leonard tells of killing two horses for food and living chiefly on mussels and small fish caught in the rivers. It was in mid-July when they decided to leave the Republican Valley and cross to the Platte which offered them more game for food.

The decade of the 1830's saw the removal of the Indians east of the Mississippi to the semi-arid regions of the west. The provisions of the Indian Removal Act of 1830 allowing eastern tribes to be granted large blocks of western land met with no objections from white settlers who were moving to the West. The general public was still being influenced by the concept of the Great American Desert and thought that Indians there could not block expanding

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[2] Narrative Adventures of Zenas Leonard, written by himself, Edited by Milo Milton Quaiffe, The Lakeside Press, R.R. Donnely and Sons Company, Chicago, Christmas 1934, pp. 4-56.

settlement of the West. Despite laws designed to protect the Indians lands from white encroachment, settlers began eyeing the areas of Kansas and Nebraska as places of settlement. The movement of people to Oregon and California through the area; the discussions of a projected transcontinental railway; and the conflict between the slaveholding South and industrial North all led to increasing restrictions on the Indians and the opening of the area to settlement. From 1854 to 1861 the eastern third of Kansas was settled rapidly under conditions of violence which might be called the "Civil War Preview." Although a few settlers had entered the Republican Valley before 1860, Fort Riley was still the frontier military outpost at the mouth of the Republican Valley.

"Bleeding Kansas" focused nation wide attention on the area newly opened to settlement and several accounts of Kansas activities also included descriptions of its geography. Climate received a great deal of attention, because of the early concept of this as a desert region. One account said "The climate of Kansas is nearly that of Virginia, without the sultriness of its Southeastern section in July and August."[3]

When white settlement began along the Republican River, the once powerful Pawnee Indians of the Valley were no longer the potent force they had been when Pike persuaded them to accept the American flag instead of the Spanish banner. In 1832 an epidemic of small pox so decimated the tribe that other Indian tribes who had been forced to pay tribute threw off the Pawnee yoke. Trappers were supposedly responsible for clothing infected with small pox germs

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[3]Max Greene, The Kansas Region, Fowler and Wells Publication, New York, 1856, p. 16.

being sent to the Pawnees from Fort Leavenworth, because the Indians had interfered with their fur trading and trapping activities.[4]

In 1857 a military road traversed the valley from Fort Riley, Kansas, to Fort Kearney in Nebraska. After the railroad extended west in 1866, many settlers traveled to Junction City and moved up stream in search of home sites. Other settlers moved west from Manhattan; while yet a third "port of entry" was the end of the railroad which was slowly being built westward from Atchison. Washington was the first county created in the Republican Valley and was without formal organization for a year, official organization occuring in April, 1860. The first settler in Washington County was James McNulty, who arrived from Iowa in July of 1857.[5]

The Younkin brothers and John P. King arrived in Clay County in April of 1856 and in 1858 John Gill, Lorenzo Gates, and a man named Mall settled in the area known today as Gatesville on Mall Creek.[6] In 1858 Clay County was attached to Riley County and subsequently to Davis (later known as Geary) County until 1866 when it was organized as an independent county. In July, 1858, John and Lew Fowler made a settlement in Cloud County. In 1866 Cloud County was organized by legislative act with F. F. Blake, M. S. Basic, and Lorenzo Gates, all of whom were residents of Clay County, appointed special commissioners. The law required that the freeholders must state on affidavit that there were 600 inhabitants and twenty freeholders within the area. It is questionable that the residence requirements were actually met. The county at

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[4]Ibid., p. 25

[5]Frank W. Blackmar, A Cyclopedia of State History, Standard Publishing Co., Chicago, 1912.

[6]Clay County Illustrated, Clay Center Dispatch, 1901, p. 4.

that time was called Shirley, in a humorous by-play in the state legislature. Since Shirley was the name of a notorious prostitute in Leavenworth, it caused a great deal of embarrassment to residents of the area, and the name was officially changed to Cloud, honoring a Civil War veteran, William F. Cloud.[7]

In April of 1860, Frank Marshall (founder of Marysville), Congressman Craig of Missouri, and a Mr. Montgomery of Pennsylvania expected Congress to pass the Pacific Railroad Bill which would provide for two railroad lines to converge 200 miles west of the Missouri River. The three men cooperated to survey and lay out a town at that particular point located in what became Republic County. When Indians destroyed their few buildings and the railroad bill did not pass as anticipated, they abandoned the project. The first bona fide settlers who took up land were D. and Conrad Myers, who settled near the Lake Sibley settlement of Cloud County on February 28, 1861. Isaac M. Schooley began the Salt Creek settlement in the fall of 1862. The legislature prescribed the bounderies of Republic County in 1860, but it was six years before there were enough settlers to create a formal county organization with the county seat at Pleasent Hill.[8]

In the spring of 1862 William Harshberger with his wife and John Furrows settled on White Rock Creek in Jewell County, but were frightened away by Indians. Several families went to White Rock Creek in 1866, but failed to establish permanent homes because of Indian depredations. In July a party of about forty Sioux and Cheyenne Indians warned the settlers to leave. John

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[7]Mrs. E. F. Hollibaugh, Biographical History of Cloud County Kansas, around 1910, privately printed.

[8]Isaac O. Savage, A History of Republic County Kansas, Jones and Chubbins Art Printers, Beloit, Kansas, 1901.

Marlin saw his wife raped and his possessions destroyed. A third attempt to take up land and establish permanent homes in 1868 also failed.

Swedes and Norwegians from the Scandinavian Colonies in Republic County began moving into Jewell County. In May 1869 a group of sixty Scottish merchants, clerks, and artisans with no farming experience founded the Excelsior Colony. Again the Indians made war upon the settlers and the Excelsior Colony abandoned its project, but the Scandinavians only retreated to Republic County and many returned later to their claims or made new ones in the same locality.[9] Men named Moorman and Harris established the first permanent settlement in 1870 and a flood of immigration followed. In July 1870 Col. E. Barker and Orville McClug petitioned Governor Harvey to establish a formal organization of the county and selected Jewell City as the county seat.[10] On July 7, 1870, the General Land Office created the Republican Land District with an office opened in Concordia the following September. Jeff Jenkins, the agent appointed, found crowds waiting to claim land in the area when he began his duties.[11]

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[9]Harry E. Ross, What Price White Rock?, The Burr Oak Herald, Burr Oak, Kansas, 1937.

[10]Frank W. Blackmar, A Cyclopedia of State History, Vol. II, Standard Publishing Company, Chicago, 1912.

[11]Jeff J. Jenkins, The Northern Tier, Concordia, Kansas, January 1880, Chapter 7.

CHAPTER IV

INDIAN OPPOSITION

Indian resistance to settlement did not present any obstacle of consequence in the rapid colonization of the Republican Valley. Although the people involved in clashes with the Indians did not consider their terrifying experiences negligible, they were none the less incidents rather than a major effort to prevent occupation of the valley. There was little if any Indian trouble in Clay County; possibly the proximity of Fort Riley persuaded the Indians to avoid creating any disturbances there. In 1857 during the Pawnee-Delaware War in the Smoky Hill Valley settlers of Clay County sought refuge in Riley County.[1] There are several local versions of the Indian scare in Clay County which center on hiding papers in a tree and finding them damaged by water. One version holds that W. H. Fletcher, county clerk, hid official papers there because he was a Captain in a local force which went off to fight Indians. Another told of the postmistress hiding the mail in the tree. However, raids from the Indian War never reached Clay County. In 1864 and again in 1868 Clay Center was a refuge for settlers from Cloud, Washington, and Republic Counties who had been frightened from their homes by Indian threats.[2] William Silver, a Clay County homesteader in Sherman township in the scare of 1868, hastily

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[1]Frank W. Blackmar, A Cyclopedia of State History, Standard Publishing Co., Chicago, 1912, p. 364.

[2]Ibid.

joined the settlers from farther north who were hurrying to Clay Center for shelter.[3]

Settlements upstream and occasional travellers experienced more difficulty with Indians. In 1857 a Mormon and an Oregon immigrant train were travelling the military road from Fort Riley to Fort Kearney when they were attacked by Indians near what is now Scandia. Five people were killed and the rest fled, but Indians were more intent on booty than killing after the discovery of some whiskey. Horses were stolen, all possessions were destroyed or appropriated and the survivors were left on the empty prairie. One man headed for Fort Riley and help and after three days reached Moses Younkin's settlement in east Clay County. Some local settlers returned to the scene of the massacre to aid the survivors when they could not get a rescue party from the Fort. Those who survived abandoned their plan to go west and returned to Arkansas.[4]

Local histories, memoirs of early settlers; and family stories all have accounts of destructive Indian incidents. However, most of the accounts show that the Indians raided only the isolated homesteads and often could be frightened off. When they could separate one or two people from settlements and, the Indians far outnumbered the whites, they did so. The Pawnees, for example, seemed more interested in stealing horses and looting than in driving off settlers. During the Civil War little military protection was available. After several raids in Jewell, Cloud, and Republic Counties, a local militia was

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[3]Since the Indians did not appear in Clay County the family returned home the next day and were greeted by bread dough oozing out on the doorstep. Mrs. Silver had forgotten her bread dough rising beside the stove and this was apparently the only casualty in the Indian scare of 1868.

[4]Isaac O. Savage, A History of Republic County, Kansas, Jones and Chubbins Art Printers, Beloit, Kansas, 1901, p. 47.

organized in 1864 under Captain Isaac Schooley of settlers from Clay, Cloud, and Republic Counties with headquarters in Elk township (now Clyde) in Cloud County.[5]

A party of six men from Clifton and Cloud County went west and north on a buffalo hunt in 1868. The party met Indians in Jewell County and all six were killed. The rescue party which set out to find them when they failed to return found gory evidence of a terrific running battle. The bodies of the men were scattered over several miles and their horses were gone.[6]

On June 2, 1869, an Indian raid moved through the Republican Valley in Cloud, Jewell, and Republic Counties. Gordon Windbigler of Big Bend Township and a young boy, Malcolm Grandstadt, of New Scandinavia, were killed in these raids.[7] In Jewell County, the Indian raids discouraged the Excelsior Colony and numerous individual settlements of Swedes and Norwegians who had moved into Jewell County from Republic settlements. In May of 1870 Cheyennes on the war path were threatening pioneers in Jewell County, but failed to discourage settlement.[8]

The Indian raids in the Republican Valley were chiefly concentrated in the years of 1864 and 1869. They were a part of the Indian resistance to settlement all along the frontier in Kansas. The Sioux and the Cheyenne were cited most frequently as the aggressive tribes. The raid on the California-bound

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[5]Ibid., p. 49.

[6]Mrs. E. F. Hollibaugh, Biographical History of Cloud County Kansas, privately printed, 1901, p. 52.

[7]Savage, p. 52.

[8]Blackmar, Vol. II, p. 265.

immigrant train in 1857 was probably carried out by the Pawnee, who were mostly given to stealthy thefts. They frequently engaged in raids of this sort if they felt it could be blamed on other tribes.[9]

A history of Indian raids in Lincoln County showed similar depredations in that locality. The only people who were killed by Indians there were killed in raids in 1864 and 1869. Captain Henry Booth in command of an army battalion in Saline and Lincoln Counties in the summer of 1864 reported, "I think from present indications the Indians are upon the Saline, Solomon, and Republican Rivers, as the buffaloes are plenty on these streams, and they depend entirely on them for a living."[10]

In Lincoln County fifteen persons lost their lives to the Indians.[11] The experience of the settlers in the neighboring Republican Valley was similar. In Republic County in August of 1868 Gordon Windbigler was killed and the following spring Malcolm Grandstadt was killed. In addition a party of six buffalo hunters lost their lives and the five who were murdered in the immigrant train massacre of 1857 made a total of 13 persons killed by Indians in Republic County.[12]

In Cloud County the same day that Windbigler was killed, Benjamin White was killed and his daughter abducted. In other instances in 1868 and 1869 settlers managed to survive Indian attack by leaving isolated homesteads for some simply fortified settlement. Some settlers successfully resisted Indian

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[9]Savage, p. 43.

[10]Christian Bernhardt, Indian Raids in Lincoln County, Kansas, 1864-1869, The Lincoln Sentinal Print, Lincoln, Kansas, May 30, 1910, p. 9.

[11]Ibid., p. 45

[12]Savage, p. 56.

raids on their homesteads. The Indians seemed to be satisfied in many cases with merely securing the horses or livestock of the settlers.[13] Thus the total loss of lives attributed to Indian attack in the Republican Valley was fourteen.

Although there was relatively little loss of life during this decade, anticipation of Indian raids and actual destruction of property discouraged many settlers who abandened the land which they had chosen. The Indians actually thwarted all attempts at settlement in Jewell County during the 1860's. This activity was the last attempt of the Indians to hold the area in which they believed that they had rights of perpetual occupacy.

The settlers themselves were dissatisfied with the protection offered by the U. S. Army, particularly when no soldiers would go to the relief of the survivors of the Immigrant Train destroyed in Republic County in 1857. A letter from Thomas Moffit written during these Indian Wars and revived by his heirs after he had been killed in the Lincoln County Indian raids, indicated the lack of faith most settlers had in the protection by the U. S. Soldiers. He said, "The government has sent out several companies of soldiers, but they can't fight Indians as well as the settlers themselves."[14] The settlers of the Republican Valley took steps to protect themselves because in,[15]

> September 1864 a company of militia having been formed, comprising about fifty men, all mounted, each man furnishing his own horse, saddle and bridle, made up of early settlers of what is now the counties of Clay, Cloud, Washington, and Republic, commanded by Captain I. M. Schooley, with headquarters at Elk Creek, now called Clyde. The arms were furnished by the General Government . . . . The arms were condemned ---- but were considered good enough for the pioneers of Republic County to fight Indians with.

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[13] Ibid., p. 44.

[14] Bernhardt, p. 7.

[15] Savage, p. 44.

In 1867 the Indians were again menacing the frontier and in the summer of 1868 an independent Salt Creek Militia was organized with about forty Republic County settlers enrolled. This force aided in retention of the White Rock settlements. These part-time soldiers extended activities as far west as Kirwin in the Solomon Valley.[16]

Settlers of Jewell County built a simple fort at Jewell City to withstand the warring Cheyennes in 1870.[17] After this date the Indians no longer impeded the rapid settlement of the area.

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[16]Savage, pp. 47-49.

[17]Harry E. Ross, What Price White Rock? The Burr Oak Herald, Burr Oak, Kansas, 1937.

CHAPTER V

HARDSHIPS AND HAPPINESS OF SETTLEMENT DAYS

Between 1861 and 1864 major attention on the Civil War slowed the westward movement in search of new land. Many who had already taken up land in the Republican Valley enlisted in the Union Army and did not return to Kansas after the war. Clay County with 163 residents in 1860 responded wholeheartedly to the call for Union volunteers.[1] "There were only 43 voters in the county, and 47 men enlisted in the Union Army, a large number of whom returned to their own state after the war was over."[2]

After the war the number of land seekers increased rapidly. The Homestead Law of 1862 offered a new way for the landless to acquire land whether for cultivation, investment, or speculation. Railroads had acquired vast acreages of Western lands as subsidies to build a transcontinental railroad system and they were interested in the sale of these lands. Numerous books, pamphlets, and advertising brochures were published during the years of settlement which extolled the virtues of Kansas. The railroads used this means to lure settlers to their lands in the west. Certain emigrant agencies also worked to bring settlers to Kansas. The Kansas Board of Agriculture was the official state

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[1]A fragment of a History of Clay County, in a private collection of Ned Hemphill, p. 1313.

[2]Charles Richard Tuttle, A New Centennial History of the State of Kansas, Madison, Wisconsin, and Lawrence, Kansas, Published Interstate Book Company, 1876, p. 540.

immigration agency for Kansas and its early reports were designed to draw new residents to Kansas.[3]

The population of the Republican Valley Counties rose rapidly from 8,754 in 1870 to 75,183 in 1880. In 1870 there were still few settlements in Republic and Jewell Counties. The Valley was subjected to several disasters in the seventies, which seemed to have little influence on retarding settlement. Grasshopper invasions and drought years contributed to the troubles of Kansas farmers. To the pioneer who had found it necessary to borrow money to develop the free or inexpensive land it may have seemed that there was a conspiracy among these elements to prevent the realization of his goal.

A few years of adequate rainfall and the propaganda of advertisers of the glories of Kansas had tended to make people forget that any portion of the area had ever been called the "Great American Desert." The drought which occurred in 1874 caused varying degrees of crop failures in Kansas and in the Republican Valley. For those persons recently established on farms, with little or no capital reserve to carry them to better seasons, it spelled disaster. Years of abundant crops of 1872 and 1873 were not enough, since the price received for corn ranged from 10 to 20 cents a bushel. Low prices, hard times, and few transportation facilities were coupled with the Financial Panic of 1873. Dry years followed the years of abundance and in 1874 migrating grasshoppers descended upon the state destroying the growing crops in their path. As a result of this unfortunate combination of circumstances numerous settlers were in such a state of destitution that public funds were appropriated for their relief and

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[3]Richard Sheridan, Economic Development of South Central Kansas An Economic History 1500-1900, School of Business, Bureau of Business Research, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, March 1956, p. 129-130.

outfits of clothing were sent to "starving Kansas" by charitable groups. Clay County had 70 persons chargeable to public funds and 110 received clothing. Jewell County had 1500 needy persons receiving food. Republic County received aid for 100 persons and Washington County listed 600 receiving food and 1600 clothing.[4]

Dry weather increased the probability of prairie fires, which prairie settlers always feared. Cloud County suffered a devastating prairie fire on February 5, 1876. On March 13, 1879, a prairie fire in Cloud County started in Lincoln township and spread through the township into Republic County before burning out.[5] When more of the prairie sod was broken, the threat of prairie fires grew less awesome. However, in dry years any area with large amounts of pasture was still threatened by fire. Such hazards were difficult to control even with mid twentieth century mobile farm equipment and plentiful volunteer fire fighters, neither of which were available to early settlers.[6]

Early settlers reported frequent experiences with tornados, or as they often called them cyclones. Kansas earned the reputation for being the "Cyclone State" and indeed location and the topography of the land in the states just east of the Rocky Mountains are more favorable for the formation of these storms than any other place in the world. Perhaps Kansas' standing was built on two of the most violent tornados in the history of Kansas which occurred May 29 and

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[4]Tuttle, pp. 540-566, 596, 598, 620, 680.

[5]Hollibaugh, p. 37.

[6]The Clay Center Dispatch in 1964 reported a prairie fire in the early spring of that year which burned many acres of pasture near Longford and at one time threatened the town itself. When it was difficult for men or equipment to stop such a fire in 1964, it is easy to understand the devastation created in pioneer days with no equipment and few men available to fight the fire.

30, 1879, at Irving, Kansas, located in Marshall County just east of Washington County. It is logical supposition that many settlers in the Republican Valley took shelter in their storm cellars at some time during those two days. Reports from Irving stated:[7]

> With a roar "like that of a thousand cannons," the cloud covered the little town. In an instant everything was swept from the earth in ruin, and death was experienced in its most dreadful forms. In the twinkling of an eye, according to persons who experienced it, all was gone. Life, property, and happiness were crushed and annihilated. The power of the storm was sufficient to accomplish in a few moments what disease and accident had not done in years.
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> Persons who lived through the storm to tell the tale said that the air was filled with fumes like sulphurous smoke, the sky had a reddish tinge bordering on purple, and the ground was rocked as if by an earthquake. What seemed to them vast waterspouts reached the ground in several places, swinging to and fro in the gale like elephants' trunks, seizing and taking up into the whirling vortexes everything that stood in their way.

Kansas tornado paths are an average length of ten miles and those over fifty miles are exceptionally rare while the average width is a quarter of a mile. Because of this size tornadoes have been storms that were local in character, but nonetheless terrifying and destructive.[8] Pioneers were probably in less personal danger than residents of modern cities and towns, especially if they dived into dugouts. After a frame house was built, some settlers converted the former dugout to a "cyclone cellar" or built a cellar which served as a storm shelter and also a storage place for garden produce.

The same day as the Irving disaster, tornadoes occurred in Delphos, Ottawa County, and Belleville, Republic County. One storm moved northeast from Belleville, removed Prairie Home School from its foundation, destroyed the

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[7]Snowden D. Flora, Tornadoes of the U.S., University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, 1959, pp. 21, 96.

[8]Ibid, p. 25.

house of Ernest Cole and the nearby camp of an emigrant family named Matthews. The fourteen year old son of the Matthew's was killed instantly when their wagon rolled over in the storm. This same storm also moved Farmington School from its foundation and destroyed a wagon on another farm.

Elk Creek township suffered a tornado on May 25, 1880, which destroyed a school house and on June 24, 1894, Republic County was visited by a series of storms with high winds but the worst damage occurred late in the afternoon. The Republic County Mutual Fire Insurance Company suffered more losses from this storm than any other. The adjustors of the damage claims spent a week and drove more than 200 miles across the county from southwest to northeast adjusting twenty-five claims for damage. Belleville was again visited by a tornado on June 6, 1899, and on May 6, 1900, a twister destroyed buildings on several farms in Norway township. In all of the tornados in Republic County before 1900 only one person had been killed.[9]

A tornado occured on May 2, 1895 in Cloud County beginning near Miltonvale and travelling in a northeasterly path about threefourths of a mile in width, then moving into Clay County. It crossed the Republican River between Clifton and Morganville and dissipated near the Washington County line. Six persons lost their lives in this storm and thirty were injured.[10] Long time residents of the northern part of Clay County often reminisce about tornados which have occured in the area and the path generally described is similar to this tornado of May 2, 1895. The storms moved north up the valley; often broke up against

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[9]Savage, pp. 76-81.

[10]Hollibaugh, pp. 125-6

Rock Hill, a prominent elevation just east of Clifton on the Clay-Washington County line.[11]

Scientific study of insects has helped to bring them into some control and agricultural scientists have also helped farmers to combat the effects of bad weather. However, no one yet has learned how to control the weather, so that all through the history of the valley there have been times when farmers must cope with the economic problems following destruction of farm property and crops by natural forces. Established farmers had cash reserve, credit, or a combination of both which enabled them to withstand temporary setbacks. Frequently this was untrue of the homesteader.

Many homesteaders were prompted to go west, because they had no land and little savings and the prospect of free land seemed to offer a chance for economic success. However, the term "free" land was misleading. In the eastern states of Indiana and Illinois during the 1850's it required about $1,000 to bring a farm into use and as settlement moved to Kansas and Nebraska costs of settlement rose.[12] Costs rose because of distance from markets; absence of timber, the necessity to use machinery to bring subhumid prairie land into production, and the difficulty of obtaining adequate supplies. Also the vagaries of weather bringing crop failures necessitated a large cash reserve for success.[13] "Without doubt $1,000 stood as a minimum figure needed by a settler

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[11]Inaccuracies of memory make it impossible to date exactly such storms or even account for the number as some people would be certain a storm occurred on a certain date, while others could describe identical damage but name a different date. However, buildings on a farm just south of Rock Hill were destroyed more than once.

[12]Allan G. Bogue, Money at Interest: The Farm Mortgage on the Middle Border, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1955, P. 2.

[13]James C. Malin, Winter Wheat, p. 102.

in the form of cash, or perhaps partly in equipment, before he could hope to bring a homestead into production in Kansas or Nebraska during the 1870's or 1880's."[14]

As many settlers came west without adequate cash reserve, it was necessary for them to find some means to finance the operation of farming. There were three chief ways in which homesteaders were able to secure money. One way was to live at a bare subsistence level and progress slowly with his project, using all profits to bring more land into cultivation without acquiring any comforts for living which required an outlay of cash. Another way was to borrow money from a loan agency using land as security. A third way was to work at some trade in a nearby community or for neighboring farmers for cash.

Settlers were living near enough to the areas of railroad construction and often secured additional funds by working on construction gangs. Some found employment at the military posts maintained along the frontier and yet others hired out to neighbors who had cash with which to operate their farms.

In writing about the Indian raids of Lincoln County, Christian Bernhardt explained how the homesteader without money worked for those who had cash. Then, when the grasshoppers or drouth wiped out the crops, both lost crops, but the money had changed hands. The settler who had done the day labor lost only the labor on his own land, while the man who had hired him was out both labor and cash. So the author concluded that in this case the homesteader without cash was better off then the one who started with a capital reserve.[15]

William Silver first came to Clay County and pre-empted 160 acres of

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[14]Bogue, p. 5.

[15]Bernhardt, p. 48.

Section 33, Sherman township in 1858 and put up a 12 by 14 foot cabin. In 1859 in order to have money for improvements he went to Riley County to find work. In the summer of 1859 he fitted out a blacksmith wagon and went to Pike's Peak and remained there until fall. In the spring of 1860 he planted crops from which he harvested enough corn from 30 acres to make a dinner for four and only 8 bushels of wheat from 1 3/4 acres. He enlisted in the Union Army during the war and also during this time was married to Lucinda Edelblute of Riley County. After the war, the Silvers returned to his farm in Clay County and in 1882 homesteaded another 80 acres of land just west of his pre-empted acres. By 1890 he had become the owner of 1,100 acres of land in Clay County and a residence in Morganville. He began his farming career with $42.[16]

Another Clay County pioneer, Ludwig Landin (sometimes incorrectly spelled Lundeen because of its Swedish pronunciation), was a native of Sweden who came to Erie, Pennsylvania in 1869. Disliking mining, he left Pennsylvania and went to Junction City, Kansas. At the insistence of a friend, he went to Clay County and selected a homestead. Because he needed money, he worked as a blacksmith at Fort Larned. He sent for his sweetheart in Sweden and when she arrived they were married in Junction City on January 1, 1871. They constructed a dugout on their homestead and then Mr. Landin secured work in Manhattan as a blacksmith at 50¢ a day. Lacking other means of transportation, he walked from Manhattan to Morganville on Saturday evenings and made the return trip for another week's work on the following day. Later he operated a blacksmith shop in Morganville for some years in addition to developing his homestead. His eldest child, Hattie Landin, was born in the dugout. By the time she

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[16]Clay County Biography (facts corroborated by Mrs. Edna Morten, Morganville,-his daughter).

was 15 years old, Landin was financially able to send her to Bethany College at Lindsborg.[17]

For those settlers who came west without enough cash to supply necessities of breaking land and living until a crop could be harvested, another avenue was open. They could borrow money to begin farming operations. Since no local capital was available in an unsettled area, funds must be secured from outside the region. Western land mortgage business was not a new business created in the Kansas-Nebraska area; but had moved west with the frontier. Eastern capital had been invested in farm mortgages in Illinois, Michigan, and Iowa before the opening of Kansas and Nebraska for settlement. There were large amounts of available capital controlled by families and insurance companies; also there were numbers of smaller investors with life-savings to invest.[18] An example of the family control of large sums of investment capital is the Davenports of New York who invested large sums of money in land mortgages in Illinois and Iowa and subsequently in Kansas and Nebraska. Agents who lived in the area would handle the mortgage negotiations on a commission basis. Between 1860 and 1903 Davenport loans totalled 571 mortgages representing $342,919 of which 38 were foreclosed. The prevailing rate of interest at the beginning of the period was 12% and by 1903 had dropped to 5%. However, the interest rate itself was not the only cost of securing a mortgage, as the agent commonly charged 6% for his services. The six per cent in the case of Davenport agents was shared by the investor. The Davenports curtailed lending in Kansas after 1880 and might have withdrawn completely except that a certain amount of land became

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[17]Interview, Miss Hattie Landin in December, 1961.

[18]Bogue, p. 7.

the property of the mortgage holder by foreclosure despite the fact that the investor preferred not to acquire real estate.[19]

Jabez B. Watkins established himself as a lawyer in Champaign, Illinois, in 1870 and began working in the farm mortgage business.[20] In 1873 Watkins transferred his farm mortgage business to Lawrence, Kansas. Watkins' method of operation was to elicit funds for investment from eastern investors and then secure properties for mortgage. Some companies with ample investment capital negotiated land mortgages themselves and then sought suitable investors to whom their assets might be sold. At first Watkins settled on investment properties with good security risks were approved for loans. As settlement moved west, Watkins' investment activities also moved west and necessitated the use of local agents for his business. One such agent was W. H. Fletcher of Clay County.[21] Mr. Fletcher whose Post Office address was Republican City in Clay County was a holder of county offices such as County Clerk and Register of Deeds. When Republican City failed to become the county seat of Clay County, Mr. Fletcher moved to Clay Center to continue his real estate and loan business.[22] Other agents of J. B. Watkins Co., in the Republican Valley were a Mr. Rason of Concordia and the firm of Sholer and Laigh of Mankato, Kansas.

F. M. Perkins, who had been cashier for J. B. Watkins Co., attempted to establish a new mortgage company and solicited local agents in Scandia and

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[19]Bogue, pp. 44-59.

[20]William Connelley, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, Chicago, 1918, Vol. V., p. 2407, Standard Publishing Company, Kansas, 1912, Vol. III, pp. 1200-1202.

[21]Bogue, p. 97.

[22]Biographical Album, p. 966.

and Washington. Perkins' attempt to enter the area with a new business indicated that this was a region where investment capital was needed and attractive opportunities existed.[23]

Watkins made good use of advertising in his business; he prepared circulars and pamphlets to send to eastern contacts extolling Kansas land mortgages as a good source of investment. Most of his advertising in the east was in religious papers as the readers of such papers were usually a "saving" group.[24] He also advertised his services in an immigration brochure published in Kansas.[25]

Despite the fact that investors and Watkins preferred not to take land instead of repayment of the loan, the Watkins Loan Company became the owner of many Kansas farms. He advertised in Chicago papers in 1877 in order to sell some of the farms which the company had acquired. In 1879 he arranged with the railroads to prepare excursion tickets and through contacts in the east, send land seekers on what he called the "grand circuit." The trip began in Atchison and travelling west to Clyde then south to Junction City. From Junction City the excursion went to the southeastern part of the state before returning to Atchison.

The company suspended loan activities in Western Kansas after 1888 although loans were still made in Central Kansas. By 1894 over 100,000 acres in western Kansas had been taken over by the company. As drought and depression continued in the 1890's numerous farms were acquired in Central Kansas. By

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[23]Bogue, pp. 94, 96, 108, 109.

[24]Ibid., p. 83.

[25]A Kansas Souvenir issued by Kansas Immigration Information Association, 1896, p. 47.

1894 when the company went into receivership, it had assumed ownership of 116,000 acres in Central and Eastern Kansas as well as lands in Western Kansas.[26]

In Kansas in 1880 there were forty major agencies and lending companies operating and that in itself serves as an indication that the development of Kansas agriculture was dependent in large measure on borrowed capital.[27] The competition between the various companies for opportunities to place investment capital plus the fact that the country was no longer a frontier area tended to reduce the rate of interest during the 1880's. The fact that settlers did borrow at high rates of interest and succeeded in many instances in repaying the loans is evidence that agriculture was a profitable operation.

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[26]Bogue, pp. 146-149.

[27]Ibid., p. 117.

CHAPTER VI

RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION IN THE REPUBLICAN VALLEY

The first railroad in Kansas began operation in 1860, but little construction followed the initial building because the Civil War suspended activity until 1865 at which time there were only 71 miles of railway in the state. As a consequence of the Pacific Railway Act of 1862, railroads expended, more rapidly after the war. Lines which became known as Central Branch Union Pacific and the Union Pacific, Eastern Division, were both authorized to build in the direction of a point on the 100th meridian located near Fort Kearney.

The Central Branch, Union Pacific, received land grants and aid which enabled it to construct 100 miles of track, and in January 1867 reached Waterville. The Union Pacific, Eastern Division, which was originally the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western railroad planned to build a line up the Kansas River and Republican River Valley where it would join the Central Branch to continue from there to the initial point near Fort Kearney. Congress had agreed that the first to reach Fort Kearney would be given grants to all the construction of a railroad westward to California.

When it became obvious that the Omaha-based Union Pacific would reach the 100th Meridian first, the Union Pacific, Eastern Division, obtained permission to build west to Denver through a Smoky Hill route rather than making use of the earlier plan to use the Republican River Valley.

The Smoky Hill Valley route was preferred for a number of reasons. It presented a better possibility for the railroad to reach New Mexico which had been a lucrative trade area ever since the establishment of the wagon routes to Santa Fe. It also provided the railroad company with a much larger land grant and the possibility of additional bond aid. A larger area, subservient to

railroad services, would be subject to the railroad which changed its name in 1869 to the Kansas Pacific.[1]

The Republican Valley lost a main line railroad possibility even before it was well organized. While the Republican Valley settlers were concerned with the problem of breaking the land and bringing it into production they had been hampered by adverse weather conditions and general depression in the early 1870's. Railroad building and expansion also came to a standstill for a few years. With the return of greater prosperity during the late 1870's railroad building activity increased. Kansans wanted railroads so badly that most state legislation was aimed at encouraging railroads rather than regulating them. At a national level Kansas representatives in Congress regularly introduced legislation to grant more land to encourage railroad building though the national trend was toward regulation and withdrawal of subsidization by the federal government.[2]

Towns along the Missouri River were in competition to secure the added incentive to growth which the terminus of a railroad or of several roads would give them. Leavenworth had an early advantage because of nearby Fort Leavenworth, but as railroad building progressed other towns began to grow and threatened the leadership of Leavenworth. Business men of the city attempted to establish a narrow gauge railroad with terminal facilities in Leavenworth.

The Leavenworth Kansas and Western railroad was chartered on May 31, 1871. The narrow gauge was chosen because it was believed that such construction was

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[1]George L. Anderson, Kansas West, Golden West Books, San Marion, California, 1963.

[2]Ira G. Clark, Then Came the Railroads, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma 1958, pp. 80-82

more economical. The railroad was to extend to the western border of the state with branch lines extending to Topeka, north to intersect a line from Lincoln, Nebraska, and from Clay Center south to the Kansas border. Funds for the construction were to be secured by local bond issues and an attempt to acquire the Kansas Pacific stocks held by Leavenworth County. Although certain counties along the way defeated local bond issues, the financial arrangements were such that construction was begun in July 1871 and by August 11, 1872 the line had reached Holton where construction stopped and was not resumed for five years.[3]

This narrow gauge railroad became one of the properties manipulated by Jay Gould in building a fortune from the railroads. Gould started with the bankrupt Kansas Pacific and built a vast railroad empire. "Gould's primary concern was in operating for quick profits rather than building an integrated system of transportation."[4] Along with the Kansas Pacific he acquired the Missouri, Kansas and Texas; Central Branch of the Union Pacific; Texas Pacific; and Denver and Rio Grande. This gave Gould a system which could connect with the Central Pacific and ruin the Union Pacific.

A part of the larger plan was the construction of various branch lines to complete an unified network of railroads which could offer serious competition to railroad companies. Several of these branch lines were built by construction companies in the Republican Valley and then taken over by the parent company. Eventually these branch lines became a part of several major railroads -- the

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[3]Harold Crimmins, A History of the Kansas Central Railway, 1871-1935, Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia, Kansas, June 1954, pp. 3-5.

[4]Clark, p. 133.

Union Pacific; the Chicago Rock Island and Pacific Railway; the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy; and the Santa Fe.

In 1872, the only railroad in the area was a branch of the St. Joseph and Denver City Railroad crossing the northeast corner of Washington County. Between 1872 and 1879 the Central Branch; the Junction City-Fort Kearney branch of the Kansas Pacific; and the Abilene Branch of the Kansas Pacific all added railroad lines in the counties of the Republican Valley. From 1879 to 1889 the narrow gauge Kansas Central;[5] the Burlington; the Rock Island; and the Santa Fe all extended lines through the area. This completed the Railroad construction in the Republican Valley and none of it was main line road.

Local politicians in the various counties tried to secure railroads because adequate transportation was essential to the prosperity of the area. Local areas offered financial inducements to persuade railroads to extend branch lines into their territories. Cloud County in 1871 voted on two local bond issues to secure railroads in the county. The Kansas Central bonds were turned down as were the Junction City-Fort Kearney Railroad bonds. However, in 1877 the Central Branch asked for bonds and Cloud County was anxious to secure lines now to furnish competition which might lower freight rates. The competition between lines however did not develop as all branches became a part of the Gould system.[6]

The small communities of the Republican Valley were affected by railroad growth in the same manner as the larger cities. The cities of Kansas City,

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[5]The narrow guage L.K. & W. was nicknamed by patrons of the line. In Valley Falls it was often referred to as the "Look, Kuss, and Wait." In Clay County patrons said it was the "Leave Kansas and Walk."

[6]J. M. Hagamon, Annual for 1885, Concordia Blade, Concordia, Kansas.

Leavenworth, Omaha, and Council Bluffs, along the Missouri River needed a network of railroads as an aid to expansion while the smaller communities needed a railroad line in order to exist at all. Seapo in Republic County was a thriving community with grist mill, stores, and few other businesses, but when the railroads did not extend to Seapo, it faded from the picture and towns such as Belleville with a railroad line or lines developed into the business centers of the area. Courtland is another example of the influence of railroad on community growth. When the Santa Fe and Rock Island railroads intersected at a point a mile from the original town site, the town promptly moved to the railroad junction.[7]

Salem in Jewell County is another community which disappeared when railroad facilities did not materialize. The people of Salem were certain that the Missouri Pacific line would extend through their community. When the tracks were laid five and one half miles from their town, the citizens tried to raise enough funds to extend a branch to Salem, but were unsuccessful. A year later (in 1888) the town began to disintegrate and stores and buildings were removed to other communities in Jewell and surrounding counties. In a years's time all that remained of Salem was one church, one store, and one blacksmith shop. The one store remained in operation until 1940.[8]

Expectations of great development prevailed in many of the newly established communities of the settlement era. Communities anticipating railroad lines planned extensive additions which they were sure would be needed to accommodate expansion. It was common practice to advertise such activities in

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[7]Kansas Centennial, Courtland, Kansas, unpaged.

[8]Glen Fogo, "History of Salem," Paper Kansas State University.

pamphlets. One such brochure was published in 1884 by the Miltonvale news press and called The Land Agent for Pinkerton and Michroedle, real estate brokers. The agents advertised town sites and farm real estate for sale along with articles which described the future metropolis which Miltonvale must become. Such hopes as evinced by town promoters did not materialize for Miltonvale nor for other towns in the Valley, for it has never been served by a main line railroad, only branches.

The farmers of the Valley looked upon the railroads as a means of getting crops to market and the communities viewed them as a means of development as transportation centers. While the main lines did not extend into the area, branch lines were sufficient to insure marketing of agricultural produce. This led to development of larger more specialized farm operations helped to eliminate a frontier community which was nearly self sufficient.

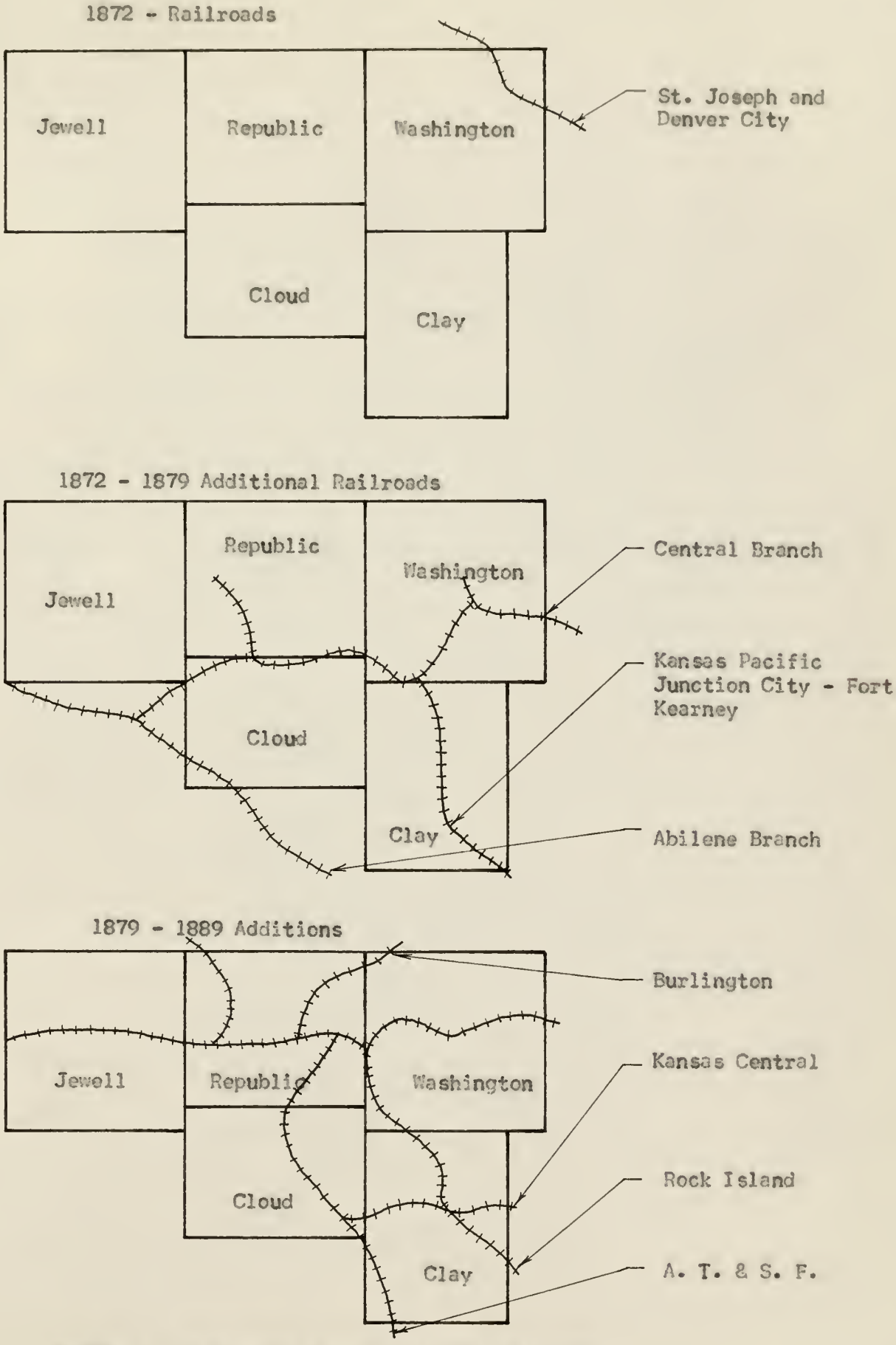

FIGURE 3. Republican Valley Railroad Building.

CHAPTER VII

WHO WERE THE SETTLERS?

Who were the people who settled the Republican Valley? The first people to take up land in the Valley were chiefly of native stock, the majority of whom came from the states just north of the Ohio River and from New York and Vermont. However, even when settlement first began, there were some people from European countries. In Clay County in 1865 there were seven Germans, one Swiss, and 15 from other European countries.[1] In general people did not come in groups to a designated spot which had been selected in advance of the actual settlement. Two different settlements were made in the Republican Valley by a colonizing organization.

In Clay County a group of English people organized as a business enterprise and established a colony at Wakefield. In 1868, the Reverend Richard Wake travelled to the area from Illinois and selected the site for a group of people in England and settlers began to arrive in August of that year. They purchased 32,000 acres from the Kansas Pacific Railroad and Land Company and on August 25, 1869 incorporated as the Kansas Land and Emigration Company. Numerous English families were established here by the company, but the drought conditions of the early seventies and other hardships of pioneer life contributed to the financial failure of the company which lasted just three years. Its land and contract were then surrendered to the Kansas Pacific Railroad.[2]

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[1]J. Neale Carman, Foreign Language Units in Kansas, University of Kansas Press, Lawrence, Kansas, 1962, p. 5.

[2]Carolyn Setchell, "Wakefield Colony," Kansas History Class, Kansas State University, 1964, pp. 4, 14.

New Scandinavia Colony in Republic County was also established as a business enterprise. The Scandinavian Agricultural Society of Chicago purchased and organized a townsite on the Republican River in 1878. The people who came here by arrangement of this company were Swedes who had located in Chicago. Each pioneer received 20 acres and a business or residence plot. Members paid a $10 admission fee and then $5 a month for three months and then a yearly fee. The company paid the settlers $1.50 a day for five years. However, the terms of this agreement were never carried out as this company also failed financially.[3] Although the company failed to make a profit, the people who were established here by its efforts remained to become a prosperous small community of farmers.

Other people did come to this area in groups but not under the sponsorship of a business organization. Small groups of families or neighbors from other areas often banded together to travel to the new land in the west to homestead or pre-empt acres. In Munden, Republic County, a group of Czechs settled in 1871. There were about 35 wagons of settlers in the party which came from Cedar Rapids, Iowa.[4]

Another such group settled in Sherman township in Clay County. This was a small group of about 30 people who had been living in Illinois, but originally came from Norway. Other Europeans came to the area as families or individuals and often influenced others from their homelands to join them. One individual who was instrumental in influencing many of his countrymen to settle in this area was Eric Swenson, a Swedish immigrant who became a

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[3]Mrs. Homer Cardwell, Mrs. Joseph Johnson, Mrs. Raymond Cooper, The Scandanavian - New Scandanavia 93 years, 1868-1961, pp. 4-5.

[4]"Munden Centennial," p. 6.

successful Clay Center businessman. He brought many Swedes to settle in Clay County. He made trips to Sweden to encourage settlement in his adopted country and was the agent for the Cunard Steamship Line which brought the newcomers to America. Most of these people settled in the Northeast townships of Clay County and the area became known as Swedesburg.[5]

The foreign element in the Republican Valley follows the pattern of the state as a whole. The largest group of foreigners in this area were Germans and the next largest was Swedish with almost every northern European Country represented among the settlers. A major portion of the Germans were in two settlements in Jewell County; one in Republic County; two in Cloud County; and seven in Washington County. Two of these in Washington County were of major importance and five of them were smaller. Swedish settlements were established in Washington, Clay, and Cloud Counties and a large group in Republic County. Czechs made up sizeable communities in Washington, Jewell, and Republic Counties. French (including native French and French Canadians) developed one large and three smaller settlements in Cloud County and a smaller settlement in Washington County.[6] In 1895 Washington County had the largest proportion of people of foreign birth and Jewell County the least. Of the total population of 87,641 for the Republican Valley, 10,975 were of foreign birth or 12.5% of the total population was of foreign extraction.[7] This was a close approximation of foreign born in the entire state.

Early histories and biographical albums concerning the people of this area were prone to publish extensive genealogical data concerning the

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[5]Interview Frank O. Oberg, January 1962.

[6]Carman, pp. 46-50.

[7]Compiled from statistics, Carman, Foreign Language Units in Kansas.

antecedents of their subjects. Such biographies of native American stock show a tendency of many of these families to make a move westward once in each generation and in some instances two westward jumps were made in a single generation. These biographies also show that many settlers were former Union soldiers. Almost every community in the Valley had an active Grand Army of the Republic organization and the associated women's auxiliary the Women's Relief Corps.[8]

Another general characteristic among many of the settlers was their poverty. Some came with no money at all. The stories pioneers told of their early hardships (even allowing for some exaggeration which might accompany such story telling) may be considered proof that they came without enough money to provide for living expenses until the homestead could be made to produce. One settler in describing conditions in Norway township in Republic County wrote, "The first settlers were poor people and some of us were very poor, our dwellings and outbuildings miserable makeshifts of poverty."[9]

Colonies were established in Kansas by a wide variety of national groups, religious groups, racial groups, and groups from common localities in other parts of the United States. This wide variety of colonies was true also of the Republican Valley.

In 1869 a small party of Danes came to Cloud County. Cuba, Narka, and Agenda as well as Munden were settled largely by Czechs, known locally as

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[8]Early histories and biographical albums concerned with the Republican Valley were prone to write complete genealogies of the pioneer residents. They offer evidence that many of the settlers' forebears had made at least one move westward in each generation. Also many of the residents were ex-Union soldiers who organized numerous GAR posts in the communities of the Republican Valley.

[9]Isaac O. Savage, History of Republic County Kansas, Jones and Chubbins Art Printers, Beloit, Kansas, 1901, p. 163.

Bohemians. The Scotch colony which had been driven from Jewell County by Indians reorganized and about 200 families settled in Republic County. A small Dutch settlement was established in Southwest Jewell County.

Veterans' Colonies were founded in several counties in the state of Kansas, one of which was in Republic County. A small group of ten from Illinois settled in Jewell County in 1870. While census statistics show an occasional Negro resident of the Republican Valley, the number was so small as to be discounted as a significant influence in the development of the Valley.

These varieties of groups brought with them social and religious traditions and customs which have gradually been modified in each succeeding generation. Homes where two languages were spoken and churches where services were conducted in two languages still existed in the 1920's, but since that time it has become a rare circumstance to find a person who can speak more than a few words in the foreign language which was once customary in his family.

CHAPTER VIII

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE REPUBLICAN VALLEY

Churches and schools were established almost as soon as the people arrived in the area. School sessions and church meetings were often held in the same building. Sometimes this building was the home of one of the settlers or a dugout vacated by a parishiner as soon as he had built a more suitable home. Initially, churches were supplied by itinerant ministers and schools were taught by any available member of the community who was deemed qualified by his fellow citizens.

Whenever a few settlers in an area were of the same religious denomination they established a church organization. By 1890 the residents of the five Republican Valley counties had established 349 churches, representing 31 different denominations. By 1890 practically all of them had erected either a hall or a regular church building. The total membership in churches was 21,561. The Methodist Episcopal (4748 members) and the Roman Catholic (5649 members) churches listed the largest memberships. The Methodist membership was distributed generally throughout the area while Catholic churches were concentrated in Cloud and Washington Counties. Seventeen of the 28 Catholic Churches were in these two counties. No other denomination represented could count half as many members as either of these two groups.[1]

The West Central Conference of the Augustana Lutheran Church is an example of church influence on immigration and settlement. Among economic and social factors in Sweden was a growing dissatisfaction with the Swedish State Church which motivated some Swedish migration to America. A large group under the

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[1] United States Census of Churches 1890.

leadership of Rev. Olaf Olsson settled in the Smoky Hill Valley. Other congregations from Sweden joined the Smoky Valley Swedes and affiliated with the Kansas Conference organized in 1870. By 1873 the conference had grown so that it was subdivided into three districts. The Republican Valley was a part of the Second District, composed of all Kansas west of Wamego. Six years later the Second District was further subdivided. All of Kansas west of Saint Marys and north of the Union Pacific Railroad was know as the Clay Center District. The churches established during the decade of the 1870's in the district located within the Republican Valley were Zion Lutheran of Brantford, First Lutheran Swedesburg, Clay Center, Ada of Keckley and Amana of Scandia.[2]

Certain Catholic congregations in Washington and Cloud County may be identified with immigrant groups. In Cloud County Catholic strength was located in the same area where groups of French Canadians settled. On the other hand, Washington County Catholic congregations coincided with areas settled by groups of German immigrants. (A map of Washington County giving names of land owners today has many names of German origin concentrated around the locations of Catholic churches.)

Church organizations, when founded, had small membership rolls. A Christian Church in Courtland organized on August 16, 1889 with fifteen members.[3] St George Catholic Church began with donation of land in 1887 near Munden and numbered 35 Bohemian families in its membership. This group of Bohemians had migrated to the Munden area from Iowa in 1871. When the church was moved into the town of Munden in 1950 there were still 38 families in the

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[2]Dr. Emory Linquist, 90th Anniversary West Central Conference of Augustana Luthern Churches 1870 to 1960, unpaged.

[3]Kansas Centennial, Courtland, Kansas, unpaged.

congregation. A Methodist Church organized near Munden in 1870 was moved to the town in 1889. A Presbyterian Church began in 1873 and New Tabor Church in 1876 were reorganized as one church called the Czech Moravian Brethren in 1886. This church in 1960 had a membership of 45.[4] In addition to the Lutheran Church in Scandia, a Methodist Episcopal Church and a Presbyterian Congregation were formed in 1877.[5]

The German Baptist Brethren -- often called Dunkards -- settled in Jewell County near Burr Oak and organized meetings of their faith in 1870. By 1872 they listed 370 members. Meetings were at first held in a large tent then in a school building before the church building was finished in 1885.[6]

Methodists began holding services in Burr Oak in 1871 and were officially organized with 15 members in 1882. They built the first church in Burr Oak in 1880 and had 110 members in 1882. Catholics organized in the Burr Oak area in 1881 with a membership of fifteen families.[7]

A group of Friends settled in Walnut Township in Jewell County. This colony was called Quaker Point by their neighbors but was named North Branch by the Friends. They established a church and a secondary school there known as North Branch Academy. In 1890 Jewell County had four Friends Churches with 493 members and in Republic County there was one church with 305 members while

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[4]Munden Centennial, pp. 12-14.

[5]Mrs. Homer Cardwell, Mrs. Joseph Johnson, Mrs. Raymond Cooper, The Scandanavian - New Scandanavia 93 years 1868-1961, p. 9.

[6]Harry E. Ross, What Price White Rock?, Burr Oak Herald, 1937, pp. 82-87.

[7]Ibid., pp. 119-124, 55-57.

Washington County also had four Friends Congregations with 471 members.[8] Similar church organizations can be identified for other areas of the Republican Valley.

The settlers of the Republican Valley established schools by local subscription even before the public school districts were organized. Clay Center township in Clay County organized its first school in 1864 and by 1878 there were 90 school districts for a school population (between the ages of 5 and 21) of 4,037. Cloud County organized its first school by private subscription in 1866 and by 1877 had a school population of 3,892 with 94 school districts. Jewell County with a permanent settlement in 1870 had 133 organized schools seven years later. In the same year Republic County listed 104 schools and Washington County 110. In 1885 there were 616 schools in the five county area for a school population (ages five to twenty) of 32,465.[9] The average number of persons of school age for each school was 52.7. Since many persons of school age did not attend school, it can be assumed that the average school attendance was considerably less than 52.7. Schools in population centers had a larger enrollment than those in rural areas, where many schools were indeed quite small. But the size of the school was not the deciding factor for the necessity of maintaining a school. Parents were anxious to maintain schools within walking distance of their homes.

Settlers upon the land set about organizing political units within the state even before they met the population requirements of the state law. By 1875 the counties were subdivided into the township units as they stand today.

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[8]United States Census of Churches 1890.

[9]Kansas State Board of Agriculture Reports, 1877-78 and 1885 86.

During the organization period communities within the counties competed for the title "county seat." The community which won the election was assured the relative stable basis for future growth. In Clay County, Republican City and Clay Center were rival candidates. When Clay Center won the election, Republican City failed to develop and today it is marked only by a stone monument in a farm pasture beside a country road. In Cloud County Concordia and Clyde, (first known as Elk City) were rivals. Clyde at first was the place where the county officials kept records. When Concordia won the election, Clyde refused to give up the records. When Concordia was designated the location of the district land office opposition to the site disintegrated and Concordia soon outstripped Clyde as a business center.[10]

In Jewell County, Jewell City won the county seat in the first election. At that time 24 votes were cast for a city called Springdale supposedly located between White Rock Creek and East Buffalo. The name Springdale was never heard of after this election of 1870. Jewell Center Town Company was organized to build a town in the exact center of the county and in April, 1873 petitioned for relocation of the county seat. Jewell Center won the election and became the county seat. Jewell City backers secured another election in 1875, but were defeated. Jewell City never succeeded in bringing the matter to an election again. Mankato is the present county seat of Jewell County.[11]

In Republic County, Belleville and Scandia were rivals for the Court House. According to an early resident of Norway, near Scandia, the supporters

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[10]Mrs. E. F. Hollibaugh, Biographical History of Cloud County, Kansas, privately printed, p. 159.

[11]Ross, p. 29, 75-76.

of Scandia as the site of the court house felt that the politicians of Belleville had won the election by unfair means and in later dealings in county affairs often referred to the political leaders in Belleville as "The Belleville Ring."[12]

Establishment of local political institutions was coupled with a definite interest and participation in state and national politics. Contemporary biographical albums listed political affiliations of their subjects. The major political parties, Democrat and Republican, were most often listed; however, Union Labor, Greenback, Prohibition, United Labor, Independent, and even Whig, a party already disorganized on a national level, were among the political affiliations of the early residents.

Since the Republican Valley had been settled following the Civil War, many of the native born Americans who took up land were former soldiers, specifically Union soldiers. Such soldiers received special consideration under the Homestead Law which enabled them to secure land. These veterans established Grand Army of the Republic posts in nearly every community in the Republican Valley and these posts were influential and active in the political affairs of the communities.

The Republican Party dominated state politics in Kansas throughout the first century. Since Kansas became a state during the violent political struggles over the slavery issue, and the Republican Party grew to a major political power as the antislavery, pro-Union leader, it was natural that the voters of the state supported this party. The GAR furnished most of the local political leadership in the Republican Valley during the post Civil War period.

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[12]Isaac O. Savage, A History of Republic County Kansas, Jones and Chubbins Art Printers, Beloit, Kansas, 1901, p. 67.

Foreign immigration brought people into the Republican Valley who had not been concerned with the earlier issues on the American political scene and who chose their political parties on other issues. Dr. Carl Swenson, President of Bethany College, was an active supporter of the Republican Party. The Swedish Lutheran settlements in the Republican Valley followed his leadership generally. Walter Nugent suggested that the stand of political parties on the issues of women's suffrage and prohibition determined the political preference of foreign element of Kansas and the Republican Valley.[13]

The agrarian social movement stirring in the Midwest during the later half of the nineteenth century was translated into political action in Kansas. The Grange while originating as an agent for rural improvement, became involved in political activity. Grange Lodges chartered by the State of Kansas supported the Independent Party which gradually became known as the Greenback Party. In 1874 this party put up a ticket which was referred to in the press as the People's Ticket. United Labor, Progressive Labor, and American Reform Parties were active in Kansas during the '80's, but by 1890 most of these reform parties were either supported or united with the Populist Party.[14] Walter Nugent accumulated evidence that the wheat fields of North Central Kansas were heavily Populist during third decade after settlement.

Active support for the reform movements was provided by local newspapers in the area, for example, the Republic County Freeman (Belleville) supported Populist candidates in 1897.[15] The Western Advocate of Burr Oak supported the

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[13]Walter T. K. Nugent, The Tolerant Populists, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1963, p. 43.

[14]W. E. Connelley, A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, Vol. II, Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago, New York, 1918, pp. 1125, 1134.

[15]Nugent, pp. 35, 201.

Farmers Alliance and Independent Union of 1890.[16] Of the newspapers published in the Republican Valley before 1890, nine of them carried titles which declared support of the third party reform movement. Such titles as Farmers's Alliance, People's Advocate, and Antimonopolist Labor Clarion, certainly indicated the political line taken by their editors.[17]

The people of the Republican Valley not only followed the reform parties, but also furnished some of its leaders. Reference to the successful (and unsuccessful) candidates for public office at a state as well as a local level appeared in such books as William Connelley's, History of Kansas and Kansans, and Wilder's Annals of Kansas often enough to indicate the active interest of this area in political affairs of their area.

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[16]Harry E. Ross, What Price White Rock?, Kansas State Historical Society, and Department of Archives, p. 156.

[17]William E. Connelley, (ed.) History of Kansas Newspapers, Kansas State Printing Plant, W. R. Smith, Topeka, 1916.

CHAPTER IX

BUSINESS AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As the land was claimed and cultivated by the farmers; business and professional people formed the small communities which served the needs of the farming population. Among some of the first businessmen who established themselves in these small communities were the newspaper men. In the Republican Valley 182 newspapers, mostly weeklies, were started before 1900. Many of these changed hands frequently and some lasted only a few months. Several newspapers were religious publications and some were trade journals. Between 1900 and 1916 forty-three more newspapers were attempted and since that time the trend has been for fewer and fewer newspapers.[1] The 1964 Kansas Newspaper Directory listed twenty newspapers published in the area. Thirteen of these newspapers were established between 1870 and 1900 and all but three function under titles originated before 1916.[2]

One of the first institutions established in an area was a Post Office. Two hundred seventyfour Post Offices have been in existence in the Republican Valley Counties since first settlement. Most of these Post Offices were established and abandoned or transferred to larger communities before 1900. Typical of the establishment of Post Offices was Cloud County. Thirtyone were established between 1870 and 1890 and only nine came into existence after 1900.

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[1]William E. Connelley, History of Kansas Newspapers, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka, 1916.

[2]Kansas Directory of Newspapers, 1964.

Thirty of the fifty Post Offices lasted less than ten years and only eight Post Offices served Cloud County citizens in 1960.[3]

By 1890 the pioneer period of the history of the Valley was completed. Farmers had brought the land under cultivation and were replacing the temporary housing at first constructed with more comfortable homes. In the small communities and larger towns, people were planning expansion and improvement of school and church facilities, businessmen were improving the varieties of merchandise offered the public, and in general the townspeople were expecting communities to grow to true urban population centers.

In most of the communities one of the first establishments serving the area was a lumber yard. By 1960 a lumber yard was still a prosperous enterprise in many towns. In some of the towns lumber business has been operated continuously since settlement. One example of such a firm is the Foster Lumber Yard in Courtland, Kansas, established in 1889 and still doing business as the Foster Lumber Yard in 1960.[4]

Amoung the businesses offering goods and services to farm and town residents were furniture stores, hotels, livery stables, dray service, drug stores, and grocery stores. General Merchandise Store advertisements appeared in newspapers as the name for a small town business. Stores of that name offered a wide variety of goods to their patrons- groceries, hardware, piece goods, hats, furniture, and kerosene lamps. General Merchandise, N. S. Flack, Prop. was the name of a prosperous store in Morganville for a number of years. The same building housed a general store operated by several proprietors until it was

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[3]Robert W. Baughman, History of Kansas Post Offices May 29, 1828-Aug. 3, 1961, Kansas State Historical Society, 1962.

[4]Kansas Centennial, Courtland, Kansas, unpaged.

destroyed by fire in 1924. It was never rebuilt after this fire and the services offered were never replaced in the community.

As automobiles came into general use, stores in smaller business centers were often bypassed by customers who began trading in larger communities. The automobiles, tractors, and trucks removed the need for livery stables and blacksmith shops. Blacksmith shops have survived because the work with metal is still a usable service in a machine age. Even in 1960 two blacksmith shops still operated in rural areas of Clay County.

The Sikes Store in Leonardville, Kansas, has survived as a general store in a small community. Leonardville isn't in the Republican Valley, but the store is patronized by residents of the Republican Valley.

Feed and cream stations were established in all small towns of the Valley and conducted flourishing business until the 1920's. A gradual decline in the number of produce stations began then but just prior to World War II there were still 14 produce collection stations operating in Clay County. By 1960 Farmer's Union Co-op operated the only collection unit in the county. Swift's, Seymour Foods, Fairmont, and Linn Creamery all maintained collection points before World War II and in 1960 either collected by truck directly from the farmer or had abandoned operations.

Key Mill of Clay Center developed a large area business as a producer of feed after World War II. Until the mid fifties the business furnished ingredients to dealers in small towns for resale to consumers in fifty pound lots. Since 1955 the company has changed over until 68% of total sales in 1960 were in bulk directly to the user averaging 3 to 3 1/2 tons per sale.

In the early 1900's drug stores did a thriving business in small towns. Often the drug store was operated by a doctor in order to dispense drugs as needed in his medical practice. Local rumors in many communities attributed

some of his business to prescription liquor in dry Kansas. Dr. C. C. Stillman was a doctor in Morganville, who operated a drug store until his death in the 1940's. After World War II this drug store became a variety store with soda fountain until it closed in 1957.

The number of businesses in small towns gradually grew fewer following the twenties. However, some businesses which adapted to the changing times have not only survived but grown in size. Nelson Hatchery and Poultry Farm of Morganville is an example of such a change. The Hatchery was begun to offer service to local farm flocks. Following World War II many farmers ceased to raise a few chickens for their own use and local trade was not enough to support a hatchery. The hatchery expanded its territory beyond local limits and introduced improved breeds. In connection with the baby chick business, the hatchery added poultry houses and became a thriving egg factory. The Nelson Hatchery purchased and used buildings which had once housed a bank, a general store, and a drug store in addition to the new construction of poultry houses just outside the city limits.

Morganville also is the site of another business which adapted to changed demands. The local Meat Market and Grocery added a locker plant to its facilities by 1940. Oetinger Bros. Market then drew business from a larger trade territory with the new service and with custom butchering and some processing of meat. The two other grocery stores which operated in the town prior to 1940 went out of business before 1952.

Every community in the area had one or more banks in operation and with a few exceptions these continued to serve the banking needs of the Republican Valley until the Great Depression of the 1930's and the National Bank Holiday.

Schools which had been established in the pioneer days were being replaced by newer structures in the small towns and rural districts. Between 1900 and 1920 small towns throughout the area were organizing high school districts. In the late 1920's numerous towns built new school buildings because the ones constructed around 1900 were not adequate for the expanded activities of the combined high schools and grade schools. Some school districts built special buildings to house the high school and retained the older building for the elementary school while others built new facilities to house both schools. Many of the newer schools built in the 20's added a combined gymnasium and auditorium and in districts where new buildings were not built some kind of makeshift hall or warehouse was converted to a gymnasium.

Very early the towns in the area began to construct sidewalks and street lights and adding telephone facilities. Scandia had kerosene lights in the 1890's.[5] Clay Center boasted of the establishment of the first electric light company in the Republican Valley, in June of 1886.[6]

Many communities constructed opera houses in the early 1900's which served the community for all kinds of entertainment and social activities. The Courtland Opera House was constructed in 1904 which accommodated local groups for plays, operettas, and recitals as well as professional entertainment by

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[5]Mrs. Homer Cardwell, Mrs. Joseph Johnson, and Mrs. Raymond Cooper, The Scandanavian, New Scandanavia 93 years 1868-1961, p. 12.

[6]Kirke Mecham, (ed.) Annals of Kansas 1886 to 1925, Vol. I, Kansas State Historical Society, 1956, p. 10.

traveling artists. Blind Boone, a Negro pianist, played in the Courtland Opera House.[7] Theaters used for stage presentations added motion pictures projection equipment. Theaters in larger towns might show movies every night while smaller communities often had movies on Saturday night only. Morganville, in Clay County, was an example of one such town with a small theater which presented films every Saturday night until Clay Center theaters installed equipment for sound movies. Then the higher cost of sound equipment made a once a week enterprise unprofitable.

Traditionally the stores in small towns remained open on Saturday night to accommodate their rural customers and the movies attracted customers to the town. During the late 30's small town merchants began sponsoring the showing of free out-of-doors movies to attract customers to the towns. An enterprising man who owned projection equipment would rent films on a weekly basis and make the rounds of as many small towns as possible in one week. The merchants of the town paid for his services and town visitors were provided with a free treat.

Because of a lack of any means for fighting fires, small towns were often seriously damaged by fire. In the early days Miltonvale suffered a series of disastrous fires as there was no water system or fire department, each fire threatened to destroy the community before it was controlled. A fire department was organized in Miltonvale in 1889, but without water or equipment, it could not control a fire in the town on April 24, 1904, until seventeen buildings had been destroyed at an estimated loss of $26,000.[8] The "Kansas

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[7]"Kansas Centennial of Courtland, Kansas," unpaged.

[8]Ezra Morgan, "Miltonvale, Western Terminus of the Narrow Gauge Railroad," (unpublished Master's thesis, Kansas State University, 1956), pp. 42-43.

Centennial of Courtland, Kansas," describes many fires occuring in the town in the early 1900's and cites them as a reason for the citizens voting bonds to construct a city water system.[9] Morganville, Kansas, had two large fires in the mid-twenties which aroused the citizens to organize a fire department and secure fire fighting equipment. One of these fires destroyed a large general store which was never replaced and the other was in a private home in which four small children burned to death. In November 1911, Jamestown and Glasco in Cloud County suffered damage from fire within twenty four hours of each other with an estimated damage of $200,000 to each. In 1914 Clay Center had a $50,000 fire.[10]

A "Centennial History of Courtland, Kansas," listed the following chronology of significant events in community development:[11]

1887 -- Railroad
1888 -- Bank building and Post Office
1889 -- Lumber yard and newspaper
1890 -- Band organized and school built
1892 -- Town incorporated
1903 -- Telephone installed
1904 -- Opera House
1906 -- Addition to school
1913 -- Electricity
1918 -- Disastrous fire
1920 -- Water Works
1950 -- Black top streets
1951 -- Irrigation
1954 -- American Communications System buys local telephone
1960 -- 22 blocks of paving

With a little rearrangement in dates or a slight change of names this same chronology of events could quite easily be applied to most of the communities

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[9]"Kansas Centennial of Courtland, Kansas," unpaged.

[10]Kirke Mecham, (ed.) Annals of Kansas 1886 to 1925, Vol. II, 1956, Kansas State Historical Society, p. 18, p. 85.

[11]"Kansas Centennial of Courtland, Kansas."

within the Republican Valley. Some of the communities could list in the chronology a closing of a bank sometime in the 1930's. Frequently a town might record the organization of a baseball team in its early history and in later years the last game of the local team. City-sponsored bands have been disbanded in most of the small towns in the Valley and some, like Courtland, donated the instruments to the Public School Music Department.

Locally owned telephone exchanges and rural lines have been taken over in most part by companies serving larger areas. The American Communication Company of Belleville by February 1960 had purchased and was operating a dial system in the North Central area of Kansas and the adjoining area of South Central Nebraska. The towns of Green, Concordia, Haddam, Morganville, Morrowville, and Webber in the Republican Valley were all served by this company by February 1960.[12]

The drouth and depression years of the 1930's have been touched on only occasionally in the local histories. Perhaps local historians were trying to present the achievements and events of significant growth and these years were years of retrogression rather than years of progress. Hardly a community in the Valley, however, does not have some building or other community project constructed through the facilities of the WPA and the PWA. Parks, swimming polls, water systems, and civic buildings were built by these agencies in a number of towns. Driving along the highways of the Valley today one can see areas where rows of trees have been planted. These few miles of trees were part of the larger plan of a shelter belt of trees in the midwest planned by

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[12]Telephone Directory, American Communications Company, February 1960.

the Federal Government. An old Civilian Conservation Corps Camp, later used as a prisoner of war camp during World War II, still stands near Concordia.

In the pioneer years agricultural fairs such as the Republic County Corn Carnival in 1899, were organized.[13] Counties still have annual fairs with agricultural exhibits and commercial exhibits by farm related businesses. Early in the 1900's many communities organized reunions held in the late summer often called picnics. Features of these picnics were basket dinners, visiting, band concerts, and political speeches when the picnic occured in an election year. The Old Settler's Picnic of Green was one such picnic and the political speeches continued as late as the gubernatorial campaigns of John R. Brinkley who drew quite a crowd to the Green Picnic. Some of these still existed in 1960 such as the Linn Picnic, the Clifton Picnic, and the Watermelon Carnival in Clyde. However, the main features have become a commercial carnival and a public dance.

Chautauqua sessions entertained and instructed the people of the Republican Valley. Clay Center held annual Chautauqua meetings in Huntress Park. The movement proved so popular that an auditorium was constructed in the Park and was used for other purposes after the Chautauqua ceased to function. It housed traveling shows of various kinds, served as a skating rink, dance hall, and even as the housing of the first county 4-H camps held in Clay County. It was also available to the City Schools of Clay Center as an auditorium for the Annual May Fete until the school district added an auditorium of size enough to handle the exhibit. Families assembled in the Park for

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[13]Mrs. Homer Cardwell, Mrs. Joseph Johnson, and Mrs. Raymond Cooper, The Scandinavian, New Scandinavia 93 years 1868-1961, p. 12.

several days of entertainment equipped with camping gear and enjoyed visiting in addition to the programs. Young people might organize camping parties with appropriate chaperonage for the duration of the Chautauqua. Clarence Darrow was featured in the Clay Center Chautauqua in August 1913.[14]

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[14]Kirke Mecham, (ed.) Annals of Kansas 1886-1925. Vol. II, Kansas State Historical Society.

CHAPTER X

FARMING IN THE REPUBLICAN VALLEY BEFORE WORLD WAR I

The pioneers who brought the prairie under cultivation were confronted by a type of soil and climate not encountered in the development of lands east of the Mississippi River. These first settlers brought with them a way of farming adapted to the humid environment of the lands east of the Mississippi and the foreign settlers came prepared to apply patterns of farming applicable to their European homelands.

The breaking of the sod required a special plow to turn the soil. The "sod buster" plow pulled by oxen turned the thick mass of prairie grass slowly and the pioneer farmer turned a few acres a season to agricultural uses. A hole was punched in this mass of roots and soil turned up to the air and corn dropped in the hole. Thus the farmer grew his first crop of sod corn. On succeeding years the soil was worked and the crops cultiveted. Jeff J. Jenkins described the sod breaking plow, "a plow the beam of which would make a half a cord of stove wood, with iron fixtures sufficient to make a respectable cow catcher for a locomotive."[1] Oxen to pull a sod breaking plow cost $100 per yoke but a farmer might pay $2 to $4 an acre to hire the work done.[2]

The subhumid environment of the prairie plains required new methods of tilling the soil to produce crops profitably. New methods in turn required

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[1]Jeff J. Jenkins, The Northern Tier, Concordia, Kansas, January 1880, p. 14.

[2]Gazetteer and Directory of State of Kansas, Blackburn and Co., Lawrence, Kansas, 1870, p. 50.

adaptations of old tools and the development of new ones suited to the environment. Kansas dominated the patent field for these new tools with 66 patents issued between 1883 and 1902 in the lister cultivators out of a total of 140 patents issued to patentees of the six state area of Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, and Wisconsin. The development of the lister made possible the extension of the corn belt in the subhumid environment.

Some of these new implements were manufactured in Kansas, for example the lister drill in 1888, patented by William H. Hollings and Joseph W. Gillett in eastern Dickinson County and called the Hollinger Lister drill. J. B. Erhsam Manufacturing Company of Enterprise, Kansas, built these drills in 1888 for the Peoria Plow Company. In 1889, J. B. Erhsam Co. manufactured a sickle head and the Kansas Harvester Company of Enterprise, organized by C. B. Hoffman, built harvesters operated by three men and eight horses. While these factories were not within the Republican Valley, they were near enough to suppose that farmers knew of and utilized the products of these businesses. The prairie plains were handicapped for manufacturing by the lack of raw materials such as fuel and metal and extensive manufacturing of the new products moved to areas where such necessities were more readily available.

The binder and the header binder were other important tools developed in the Kansas wheat belt and helped to make extensive wheat growing possible. Disc tillage tools were developed and used in this area in the late 1890's and the early 1900's. In addition to tillage and harvesting equipment the winter wheat, more suitable to the soil and climate than spring wheat, soon supplanted both winter and spring soft wheat varieties.[3]

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[3]James C. Malin, Winter Wheat in the Golden Belt of Kansas, University of Kansas Press, 1944, p. 215, p. 223, pp. 227-28, p. 232, p. 243, p. 245, p. 246.

The farmers who adopted these new methods and new tools and new crops, still retained an older pattern of living. They built homes reminiscent of Eastern homes and planted trees for shade, large vegetable gardens, and orchards. Traveling through the Valley today, one can still see a clump of lilac bushes growing along a fence row or in the corner of a pasture, evidence that a pioneer homestead once stood there. Sometimes a stone foundation for a building is near a hardy old lilac bush. Early farmers raised cattle, sheep, horses, hogs, and poultry. But when the sod had been broken, the oxen were replaced by horses and mules.

The farmer's water supply came from driven wells, since the ground water supply was abundant in the Republican Valley. Most of the farms were equipped with windmills for pumping water and many farm homes were also supplied by cisterns. Farm wives who boasted the latest conveniences in their kitchens might have a pitcher pump and sink connected with the underground reservoir used for storing collected rainwater.[4]

Houses of a more spacious nature replaced the temporary structures of the first settlers. The architectural style which predominated in the farm house was a tall, narrow, two story structure with a steeply pitched roof. The second floor was built into the roof line so that the upper rooms had walls or ceilings which sloped. From time to time one story, lean-to wings might be added to these structures and most of them featured a narrow open front porch. Many farmers planted shade trees about their homes, often in long rows. Barns and sheds were built to house livestock and store grain and hay. Often the

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[4]Cistern water was considered desirable for household use because of its softness and many homes in towns retained the old cisterns even after a city water system made water available to them.

original orchard planted by the farmers served as a small pasture for the family milk cows.

An area around the barn was usually set aside to furnish a small pasture for livestock and was often referred to by the farmer simply as the "lot." In many farm lots, farmers constructed a shed of poles open on one side. When wheat was harvested the separator was set up in the farm lot so that the straw could be blown directly on this building making it a warm shelter for animals. New straw could be added each year as needed to keep the structure habitable for livestock.

A farmer operating between 700 and 1,000 acres of land would have an average of forty work horses with at least three hired men on a permanent year round basis with transient labor hired for peak work seasons.[5] With this many work horses a farmer never planted less than sixty acres of oats to be harvested for feed. In addition to grain, farmers fed prairie hay, which was purchased if they had none of their own. Farmers also used alfalfa as hay. Alfalfa also served to improve the soil and help in a planned rotation of crops for various fields. One farmer maintained a program of planting twenty acres of alfalfa each year and leaving it in production for five years, with twenty acres of old alfalfa being turned under each year. This program varied if weather conditions did not permit planting or plowing up of fields in any particular year.

Gang plows were drawn by four or five work horses and a sulky plow was drawn by three or four animals while a drill required four or five horses. A

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[5]While this size farm was much larger than the average, there were a few units this large in every community of the Republican Valley during the horse powered era of farming.

team of two horses was all that was required for mowing, raking, and pulling wagons. Two or three horses might be used on corn planters, cultivators, and weed cutters.

Farmers cultivating fewer than 700 acres might use fewer horses, but the number needed had to be determined by the implements and the time required to complete the work rather than the number of acres farmed. Twenty to forty horses was a common number of horses for a farm in the Republican Valley, regardless of acreage.

In the summer time field work began usually at 7:00 A.M. and ended at 7:00 P.M. Thirty to forty minutes were consumed morning and evening caring for horses and fifteen minutes at noon was necessary to care for teams. At harvest time, farmers traded labor and hired transient labor. Men rode freight trains through the farm country in harvest time and stopped wherever extra labor was needed. Such laborers usually slept in the farm barns and received an hourly wage plus three meals a day. After World War I these transient laborers were sometimes called Wobblies, the slang term for members of the International Workers of the World. This was a term of disapprobation applied to all transients and no one bothered to find out if the men were really members of the labor organization.

Since wheat was the primary crop of the Lower Republican Valley the major farm work in the summer months was harvesting this crop and preparing the fields for fall planting. The grain was cut in late June and the straw dried for about ten days in shocks. In July harvest began, with threshing outfits making the rounds of the farms in the communities. The owners of the outfit furnished the separator and steam engine operator and the farmers furnished bundle pitcher, grain haulers, and rack men. Some farmers would stack the

bundles in large cone shaped stacks with the heads to the center and defer the actual threshing of the grain until fall.

After the harvest, farmers spent most of the month of August plowing the wheat stubble under in preparation for fall seeding. Most farmers spent the month of August at this process regardless of the size of the farm, since the larger operator used more men and equipment than was necessary on the smaller acreage to accomplish the job in approximately the same time.

The farmer's fall work consisted of planting winter wheat and harvesting corn. Corn shucking by hand was a slow process and at times continued well into winter. Much of the corn grown in the predominantly wheat growing area was stored in a crib and used for feed. In the areas where corn was a major cash crop more corn was sold, but much of the corn was converted to beef rather than sold as grain. Oats harvested was mainly kept on the farm for feed.

In the counties of the upper Republican Valley more corn and hay were produced and more cattle fed. Burr Oak was a cattle center, shipping out car load lots of cattle at least once a week. Enough broom corn was grown in the Valley to support at least two broom factories, one in Clay Center and one in Burr Oak.

Horses were required not only for farm work but also for driving and riding stock. The young men of the Valley, whether from farms or small communities, took great pride in driving stylish rigs and fine horses. Horse racing was quite a popular form of entertainment. Some farmers even maintained race tracks. The Stoneback farm west of Morganville attracted young men from a wide area to a particularly good track.

Farmers replenished the stock of horses either through breeding his own mares or by buying new teams from other farmers or from stock farms. Many

small communities had breeding stables as one of the businesses. One breeding stable in Morganville kept two or three stallions and jacks. These breeding barns were favorite haunts of boys playing hookey from school and a farm boy knew his father considered him of age when he was sent to the stable with a mare to be bred.

By the early 1900's, automobiles began to replace driving horses before other gasoline powered vehicles appeared in rural areas, but were far from commonplace. In 1911, S. A. Anderson, a farmer in Clay County, was fined $100 for frightening a horse with his gasoline automobile on a road just north of Clay Center. Several tractors with three spiked wheels and angle iron lugs were in use before 1918. This type of tractor was used only for plowing and heavy pulling and could not be used on row crops.

The large orchards which early pioneers had planted had deteriorated by 1912 and generally such orchards were not replaced. Farmers no longer tried to grow large vegetable gardens with many different varieties, but settled for a few vegetables which would be grown successfully year in and year out despite varying amounts of rainfall and spells of intense heat.[6]

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[6]Interview with Dr. S. A. Anderson, and M. G. Canfield, August, 1965.

CHAPTER XI

FARMING IN THE REPUBLICAN VALLEY SINCE 1918

After World War I, the changes in farming which had begun in the earlier era moved at a more rapid pace. The use of powerdriven farm equipment using gasoline engines replaced the old horse powered farm machines. Like a chain reaction this altered or remodeled equipment, created different needs in growing crops, affected the labor requirements, and even affected the operation of farm households.

Wartime demands for food had created a good market for the farmers of the Republican Valley and the prices paid for wheat and corn were high while operation costs did not increase proportionally. When agricultural depression began in the 20's, many farmers in this area did not suffer materially until the world wide economic depression of the 30's when the area suffered the double disaster of drouth and extremely low prices on all farm staples.

The Jewell County Republican of Jewell City noted in its columns on October 17, 1924, the changing of farming techniques, thus: "Len Durham, of Prairie Township, sold 4,000 bushels of wheat for $5,000 . . . He bought a $1600 truck."[1] In 1960 a farmer might easily sell the same amount of wheat for approximately the same market price, but his truck might cost twice as much as one in 1924.

On one farm in Clay County in the 1920's the owner purchased a combine for $1800 and sold the wheat crops during the early 20's for $2 to $2.50 per bushel. In the late 1950's the operator of the same acreage purchased a combine for

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[1]Kirke Mecham, Annals of Kansas, Vol. II, 1911 to 1925, p. 391.

$5200 and sold crops during these years for an average price from $1.25 to $1.50 per bushel. The owner operator of this farm bought a Wallace 3 plow tractor in 1920 for $2100 and in 1950 the tenant operator purchased an Oliver Row Crop tractor of comparable power for $2200. A new plow of the same type in 1960 cost $4000.

A wheat drill in the 1920's could be bought for $175 while in 1950 a wheat drill was $750 and by 1960 - $1100. The price of a three bottom fourteen inch plow increased in price from $200 in 1920 to $600 in 1940 and $800 in 1960. The machines in use by 1960 were improved in efficiency and quality. Even with the use of fertilizer and improved seed the increased yield was not comparable to the increased cost of equipment. The farm for which the implements listed were purchased had a ten year average - 1920 to 1930 - of just under 30 bushels per acre. In 1960 the operator of the farm stated that the ten years averege of the '50's was about 35 bushels per acre.

Combines were tried out in Kansas in 1918, fourteen being used during the next two years. Between 1920 and 1922 farmers bought 1500 combines and by 1930, 24,239 combines harvested wheat in the Kansas fields.[2] In 1923, Bert Fisher, farming near Morganville, purchased the first combine used in Clay County. J. I. Case Company, the manufacturer, sent representatives to photograph its operation and used these pictures in promotional programs. During the same year another farmer in the same area bought a ten foot tractor binder and a 5-plow Allis Chalmers tractor with lugged wheels to pull the machine. This farmer abandoned the tractor binder in 1929 for a pull-type combine which was used each harvest thereafter until 1948. The number of men required to harvest a wheat crop changed abruptly in that year from two crews (one to cut and shock and

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[2]Leo M. Hoover, Kansas Agriculture After 100 Years, Bulletin 391, Agricultural Experiment Station, Kansas State College, Manhattan, August 1957, pp. 45-56.

one to thresh) totalling approximately thirty men to one crew, which consisted of a man to operate the tractor, a man to operate the combine, and one to drive a truck.[3]

Despite the depression years of the 1930's, the number of combines in Kansas nearly doubled (46,572) by 1940. In the Republican Valley by 1954 farmers reported an average of 1.7 tractors, 1.2 trucks, and 1.1 combines per farm.[4] During the thirties tractors changed from lugged wheels to rubber tires which greatly increased their flexibility. A variety of combines according to size could be purchased and the kind a farmer used depended on the number of acres he intended to combine, modified by how much money he wished to invest in such a machine. Another modification which many farmers decided was useful to them was the operation of the combine from the power take-off of the tractor. Combines cutting a smaller swathe were operated in this manner. It was not until after World War II that ten, twelve, fourteen, and sixteen foot self-propelled combines came into general use. Few of the smaller combines were still seen in operation in the Republican Valley in 1960. Farmers with smaller acreages of wheat which made the expense of a large combine impractical could use the services of custom combine operators. Farmers with large acreages of wheat also hired the harvesting done, but custom combining has not replaced the farm ownership of combines.

Before the advent of the tractor, farm tools had been limited in scope by the available power supplied by draft animals. Oxen and later teams of horses and mules established realistic limits for any given implement. Some farmers

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[3]Interview with Dr. S. A. Anderson.

[4]Hoover, p. 48-52.

had tried the use of steam tractors to pull plows, but their high cost and great weight handicapped their use. The steam engine was more effective in furnishing power to run a wheat separator for harvesting, but was not generally owned by individual farmers. The farm operated by a man with one tractor in 1960 would have required several teams of horses or mules in the early 1900's. The farmer then was forced to set aside a few acres of land and provide pasture and housing for his draft animals. Much smaller space was necessary to store his tractor. Additional land and feed storage was required to feed a typical farmers horses and mules. The care of horses also required more man hours of labor annually than the tractor. Young men growing up in rural neighborhoods were a source of man power for farm operators. A young man who wished to farm for himself might work as a hired hand long enough to acquire the limited capital necessary to set himself up in farming.

The household side of farm life reflected the need for extra labor beyond the farmer's family. The hired men lived in the farmer's home and the housewife provided the food, room, and laundry facilities for them. At harvest times the large crews of extra labor were fed by the farmers' families. The household labor force consisted of the farmer's wife, a hired girl, and perhaps some teenage relatives were pressed into service at times of extra work.

These harvest meals have been described in articles and fiction concerning the rural Midwest as feasts of golden fried chicken, fresh garden vegetables, fluffy mashed potatoes, and home made apple pie. While this may have been true in some instances, some of the men who ate these meals also described harvest meals that were poorly prepared, of the cheapest food available, and served in a dirty environment with plenty of flies for company. Two to three meals a day for fifteen or twenty men cooked on a wood burning range, where even the

bread must be baked at home, was a full day's job. The stacks of dishes from one meal were hardly washed before it was time to begin the next. In addition to the meals regular household duties had to be carried on even during these peak work periods. Not the least of these was the long clothesline filled with denim overalls and work shirts which were washed by hand or by machines which were operated by hand.[5]

From 1900 to 1960 the average farm in the Republican Valley increased 130 acres, from 220 to 350. At the same time the farms were increasing in size the number of man hours required to produce crops was greatly reduced. By 1960 slightly more than one hour of labor per acre was required to produce wheat and four to five man hours of labor produced an acre of corn.[6] In 1894 in central Kansas it was estimated that ten hours and twenty four minutes per acre were required to bind, shock, and later thresh a crop of wheat. In the United States estimated average time required to produce a crop of wheat in 1910 to 1914 was 15.2 man hours per acre and in 1945-46 only 6.1.

The increase in agricultural productivity is not due alone to substitution of machinery for labor, although this has been the greatest factor in the increase. Other factors are (1) use of hybrid and other high yielding crops, (2) new chemicals and other techniques to control disease in both plants and

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[5]My mother was married in 1903 and her family from the first day of her married life, consisted of seven people. In addition to herself and my father, there were three hired men, one hired girl, and one orphaned nephew, age 10 years; and she didn't know how to cook.

[6]C. H. Larson, G. E. Fairbanks, and F. C. Fenton, What It Costs to Use Farm Machinery, Bulletin 417, Agricultural Experiment Station, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, April, 1960, pp. 1-9.

animals, (3) insect and weed control, and (4) greater use of commerical fertilizers.[7]

Another change in farming operation is the increasing use of irrigation. In 1950 there were only 9 irrigated farms in the area, and in 1959 there were 461 farms with almost half (213) of them in Republic County. The average size of the farms irrigated in the area was 443.25 acres while the average size of all farms in the area was 349.64 acres.[8] The high cost of installing irrigation systems and the expense of additional equipment to farm irrigated land requires larger farms with proportionately larger incomes.

The development of cooperatives is not a recent development in the farm economy of Kansas. One of the oldest cooperatives in Kansas is the Washington County Creamery in Linn, Kansas. The Grange organized cooperative stores which failed in many instances because of inadequate and inexperienced management. The Farmer's Alliance which moved into Kansas in the 1880's began as a purchasing medium for farmer's supplies. The Alliance Insurance of McPherson is an outgrowth of the Farmer's Alliance and indeed is the only tangible remains of the movement.[9]

During the growth of farming in the Republican Valley, farmers in some communities have organized local cooperative elevator associations for marketing of grain crops. One such Farmer's Elevator existed in Morganville in Clay County. However, it has had to affiliate with a larger cooperative organization

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[7]Hoover, pp. 52-53.

[8]U.S. Census of Agriculture 1950, Vol. I, Part 25, Kansas, 1959, Part 21, Kansas U.S. Department of Commerce.

[9]Ralph Snyder, We Kansas Farmers, F. M. Stevens and Sons Publishers, Distributed by Kansas COOP Council, Topeka, Kansas.

in order to operate. The CO OP, a brand label for the members of the Consumer's Cooperative Association, is a wide spread farmer's enterprise. It operates elevators in most communities in the Republican Valley and in larger population centers operates filling stations and tank gasoline service to farmers, grocery stores, general merchandise stores, feed mills, and credit unions. The profits of retail operations are used to enlarge the services and also rebated to customer members on a basis of goods purchased. Local operations are directed by a Board of Directors of local members and managed by professional businessmen hired by the organization.

The REA is another phase of cooperative endeavor which has been successful in Kansas and the Republican Valley. The Rural Electrification Act proposed and passed during the first Franklin D. Roosevelt administration provided the financial means for farmers to organize cooperatives to provide electric power to rural areas. Private power companies had either been uninterested in or unable to furnish power to sparsely settled rural areas. Prior to the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, electricity of Kansas farms had been provided by farm generators, wind or engine driven, and a few rural lines chiefly extensions of intercity lines operated by private companies. By 1956, Kansas had 36 rural electric cooperatives employing 581 people full time to serve the Kansas farmer. Due to lack of materials during the years of World War II, very little construction was done from 1942 to 1945. Only four of these companies within Kansas generate all or part of the energy distributed while the rest is purchased by the organization from private utility companies.[10]

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[10]Kenneth E. Merrill, Kansas Rural Electric Cooperatives - Twenty Years with the REA, Center for Research in Business, University of Kansas in cooperation with Kansas Electric COOP Inc., 1960, pp. 6-17.

Three REA Cooperatives serve the rural areas of the Republican Valley - The C and W Electric Cooperative, Clay Center; Jewell-Mitchell, Mankato; and the NCK Electric Cooperative, Belleville. A small area in southern Cloud County and Clay County is served by the D.S. and O. Cooperative of Solomon and the Northeast corner of Washington County is served by the Nemaha Marshall Cooperative. The Jewell-Mitchell Cooperative was organized in 1936 and the C and W and NCK were organized in 1938. By 1957 the three cooperatives served 10,298 members, however, only the NCK members all lived within the Republican Valley. The C and W and Jewell-Mitchell served some customers in parts of 12 different counties.[11] The power utilized by these three cooperatives is purchased from the Kansas Power and Light Company and the Western Light and Telephone Company.[12]

These Cooperatives furnish power to rural commercial establishments as well as agricultural users. Service stations, motels, and cafes along the highways use REA electric power. Both C and W and NCK furnish power to American Telegraph and Telephone underground communication cables at several points in the area. C and W also furnishes power to a microwave tower near Greenleaf. Near Linn a pumping station, the first L P gas pipeline ever put in operation, uses REA power. The NCK Cooperative furnishes power to thirty-six pump irrigation wells in its territory. The C and W furnishes power to two small villages and the NCK to three. The NCK furnishes power to the

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[11] Ibid., pp. 97-99, pp. 147-149, pp. 131-133.

[12] Ibid., P. 39.

Republican Valley Feed Lot near Scandia which continuously feeds 500 to 10,000 head of beef cattle.[13]

The extension of electricity into rural areas has not only increased the efficiency and livability of a farm, but also has provided the facilities for farm related businesses to be developed in an area where the chief natural resource is the soil suitable for growing crops. It is also estimated that for one dollar invested in a rural electric system that four dollars are spent on electrical wiring and equipment. "On this basis the more than $2 1/2 million invested in rural electric plants of North Central Kansas has created a market for some $10 million worth of appliances, wiring, and equipment."[14]

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[13]Information furnished by Mr. Charles W. Ellis, manager of C and W COOP and Mr. Everett Ledbetter, manager of NCK COOP.

[14]"Historical Record of NCK Electric Cooperative."

CHAPTER XII

THE CASE OF LARS ANDERSON

The Republican Valley of Kansas, has been and is basically an agricultural area. The soil is its chief natural resource despite the fact that mining of coal has been tried and search for oil producing areas still continues. Original settlement began chiefly with units of 160 acres. Many original settlers were not satisfied with such small farms and they set about acquiring additional acres as quickly as possible. Some homesteaders acquired as much as a thousand or more acres rather quickly. William Connelley in the Standard History of Kansas and Kansans listed prominent citizens throughout the state among which are a representative number in the Republican Valley. Almost without exception these men regardless of other vocations listed were owners of large land acreages. The Biographical Dictionary of Clay and Washington Counties published in 1890 also listed the owners of large units of land. While both of these books would include the more affluent settlers they still furnish an indication of the size of larger land holdings in the area. The very fact that land could be readily accumulated also indicates that many small land holders must have disposed of their holdings for various reasons.

Since the land in 1960 is held by third and fourth generation descendants of the original settlers, large farm holdings were often divided into smaller units if they remained in the hands of the original family. One such homesteader who acquired 1200 acres of land in the northern part of Clay County was Lars Anderson. He began with one homestead in what is now Garfield Township of Clay County in 1872. An additional 160 acres became his through a homestead taken up by his parents. The remaining land was purchased from other owners. One parcel of land (360 acres) was originally railroad land and the

remainder had been homesteaded by others who later disposed of the land. The deeds to Anderson's property show one to five owners of the various pieces before he acquired it. The Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company held mortgages on various units of this property and the issuance date of each loan coincided with the date a new piece of property was deeded to Lars Anderson. No other mortgages were recorded on this land during his lifetime.

During the 1890's there is a record of transfer of deeds to each of his four daughters for 80 acres and 160 acres to his son. In 1917 the records of the deeds showed a transfer of lands in the estate of Lars Anderson to Helen Anderson (his widow) and to his children and their heirs. In 1932 deed transfers were again recorded in the matter of the estate of Helen Anderson. This division of land divided the estate so that Severt Anderson (son of Lars and Helen Anderson) owned approximately 400 acres and each of the daughters (or their families) owned approximately 200 acres of farm land.[1] In 1935 the first transfer of land to someone outside the family of Lars Anderson was recorded. Ella Anderson Higgins (daughter of Lars) sold an eighty acre tract. In 1946 the next transfer of land outside the family occured when the Severt Anderson Estate deeded 20 acres of land adjoining the town of Morganville to Lou Allen.

By 1960, 220 acres had been sold to others than the descendants of the original owner. The four hundred acres inherited by Severt Anderson was held as an estate by his four children and the remaining acreage is held in four units, three of 160 acres each and one of eighty, by six of the grandchildren of Lars Anderson and one eighty is held by 2 great grandchildren. The Severt

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[1]Due to irregularity of land parcels and joint ownership of some tracts used, approximate rather than exact acreages have been used to show the dispersal of land from generation to generation.

Anderson estate and 240 acres of land owned by Anderson heirs is operated on a rental basis by one of the heirs of the property.[2] There were five houses and accompanying farm buildings on this property, four of which were occupied by renters and one by the owner until 1940. Since 1940, three of the homes have been removed and all the accompanying buildings torn down. On one site the buildings are all gone and the small house remains as a storage building for crops. The fifth house and farm buildings remain on the Sevort Anderson estate but the house is unoccupied and the buildings are old and unsuited for any extensive use in farming operations.

If this land had been divided equally at each generation, the average amount of land owned by each individual in the third generation (16 grandchildren) would have been less than 100 acres. Even taking into consideration the inter-family sales no individual third generation owner holds more than 160 acres, an amount equal to the original homestead. Since these owners are non-farmers, the land is operated by renters, and the pieces of land are all farmed by the renters in addition to other parcels of land.

The accumulation and dispersal of this particular portion of land was a pattern of development followed with some variation by many in the family ownership of lands in the Republican Valley. In some instances, by the time the third generation was eligible to inherit land, whole farms had been sold in order to settle inheritances. In other cases, more of the second generation became active farmers and in other families there were fewer descendants to inherit the land.

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[2]"Records of Deeds Clay County, Kansas," Book Y.

In Kansas as a whole, 45 per cent of the owners of farm land are active farmers who farm 47 per cent of the acreage of farm and ranch land.[3] Therefore, other family groups probably have had more owner-operators on inherited land than the one described. Perhaps farm land, for best utilization, should be owned by farmers, however, as long as inheritance exists, and as long as people may invest savings freely, some land will be owned by individuals other than farmers.

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[3]Wilfred H. Pine, Land Ownership in Kansas 1958, Bulletin 430, Agricultural Experiment Station, Kansas State University, Manhattan Kansas, and Farm Economic Research Division, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, March, 1961, P. 5.

CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSIONS

The United States is a great agricultural nation capable of producing abundant amounts of food and fiber and at the same time it is a great industrial nation. Increasingly greater numbers of the population live and work in the great industrial centers of the United States while fewer people live in the rural areas of the country. Farmers have become a minority group which produces a great share of our national wealth. The shift from rural to urban economy has been a continuing process from the beginning of the United States. The impact of the Industrial Revolution was felt in the areas of manufacturing and transportation early in the 19th Century and factories applied new methods and inventions to the production of goods. The application of power and greater mechanization or agricultural production did not occur until the Twentieth Century.

As long as new land was available for American farmers, the tendency was to take up newer more productive land rather than develop methods of production which would improve the output of existing agricultural areas. When the United States Census figures of 1890 signalled the end of the frontier, the American farmer produced only enough to provide food for himself and less than seven other people. It was after this time that the American agriculture developed its great productive capacity.

The settlement and development of Kansas and more particularly the Republican Valley of Kansas occurred at the end of the frontier period. The Valley was settled quite rapidly in the twenty years between 1870 and 1890 and reached a peak of population in 1890. The population of the Republican Valley steadily declined (with some minor fluctuations) after 1890. Urban units

(over 2500) have increased slightly, but steadily, throughout the period while small rural communities have declined along with farm population.

The rapid growth and development of the area was unusual, for the untouched prairie was converted to productive and prosperous farms in twenty years or less. Most of the farmers had been accustomed to forrested terrain and humid climate and had to adapt to a prairie subhumid environment in order to create farms. The new environment required the development of more specialized farms and more capital to finance operations than had been necessary in previous frontier areas. As a result the subsistence-type farm and rural community could not exist successfully in such an environment.

Early settlers in the area anticipated an industrial growth in addition to farm activity. Early pioneers were certain that deposits of coal and salt found in the valley would be a basis for industrial productivity. Small communities were developed with the idea that they would grow to great trade and industrial centers. Also the people of the Valley felt that the Republican River could be developed for navigation.

Another facet in the development of the Valley was securing transportation facilities necessary to market the produce of the Valley. Transportation was vital to the agricultural development as well as anticipated industrial growth. If the farms were of the specialized type, then it was necessary to market profitably the specialized crops. Securing a railroad line became a prime objective of most of the communities in the Valley. The network of railroads which spread over the state of Kansas was responsible in part for the rapidity with which the area was settled. Railroad companies encouraged development by sale of lands owned by public grant and other methods, because a populous thriving area meant profitable operation of the rail lines. Communities tried to lure railroads to build main lines and branch lines, by sale of bonds.

Every community could not be served by a railroad and not all communities who were lucky enough to have a railroad line extended to the town would grow to large cities. Failure to have a railway caused many small communities to disappear completely.

Many schools and churches were established in rural areas and communities. These began as small groups and rarely grew larger. These groups in most part remained in operation until the 1920's. Since the schools were largely tax supported and organized by law, the changes from the one room country school systems to the larger attendance centers usually in small towns has been accomplished through state legislative action.

The settlers in the Republican Valley represented a variety of national origins. A majority of the people were of native Anglo Saxon stock, but Scandinavians, Germans, French and French Canadian, and Czechs settled in several communities within the area. Some of the social customs, church groups, and family names continue in some areas to mark the national origins of these settlers, but by the third generation even the use of a language other than English had disappeared.

The 160-acre unit prescribed by the Homestead Act was rarely satisfactory for the original settler. The most successful farmers in the Valley acquired larger acreages by pre-emption, purchase, or in some instances the consolidation of different homesteads made by different adults in the same family. Individual holdings were reduced in some instances by inheritance with the succeeding generations, but even so the average size of a farm was larger than the 160 acre unit. Despite division of property rapidly despite the world wide depression and poor prices of the 1930's. World War II postponed temporarily the production and use of more efficient tractors, combines,

cornpickers, and other equipment, but innovations and improvements moved forward quite steadily after that interlude.

These improved methods and equipment contributed to the surplus production which depressed farm prices. At the same time they made it possible for fewer men to produce surplus commodities. Attempts by national legislation to curtail production by taking land out of production were nullified by the ability to produce more per acre than had been previously possible. The capital investment which a farmer must make in equipment in order to farm has become so great that he must farm as much acreage as is possible with the equipment in order to insure a profitable operation.

The Republican Valley never supported the subsistence type farm which has been idealized in literature and in the minds of people who picture the vigorous pioneer and a self-sufficient life. The ideal that our cities are regenerated from the farm youth who migrate to the city life is a thing of the past if it ever existed. The tradition of "log cabin to the Presidency" as a part of our national tradition also affects the picture of farm life. The people who settled here envisioned a great valley in which industrial development played as much a part as agricultural development. When natural resources which are basic to natural development of an industrial society were not discovered, the many Post Offices, small towns, churches, schools, and other institutions which might be the nucleus of a thriving city gradually disappeared from the rural scene. Population declined steadily after the original peak was reached and no major cities have developed in this area.

Quite gradually throughout the area and during the century of its development the Republican Valley has developed into a reasonably prosperous farming area. The large farms which in reality can be described as agricultural

factories and the tiny acreages which cannot support a farmer except in extreme poverty are negligible in the Republican Valley. A better term to apply to a farm in the Republican Valley in 1960 than family farm is the "small agricultural business." The definition of the family farm is quite elusive since so many different conceptions of what constitutes a family farm are proposed. The use of the term produces a different picture in the minds of different men using the term. The best definition for a family farm in the Republican Valley is one in which a family operates a farming unit with or without additional labor and reaps the profits of the operation. A vast majority of the farms in the Republican Valley in 1960 are family farms by this definition. Whether or not this type of small business enterprise continues to operate in the Valley in the future, cannot be predicted. However, its future is bound up with the successful or non-successful future of all small business operations whether agricultural or industrial in character.

Another facet of the development of agriculture in the Republican V lley and in the agricultural area of all the United States is the sociological value of small farm units as well as the economic productivity. Research into this area does not reveal any significant factors which might prove that the value of a small farm is either negligible or profitable despite economic efficiency.

The part played by government subsidy to agriculture since the 1930's is controversial on a national level and a local level as well. Little if any research is available in this area. It is impossible to assess whether subsidies have slowed the decline in the number of farmers or have perpetuated inefficient farmers. It is obvious that it has not stopped the decline of farm population.

The size of the average family farm in the Republican Valley has increased. The family farm home is comparable in convenience and comfort to the town family home. Electricity, mechanized equipment, and improved farming methods have made farms more productive while employing considerably less man power. Country schools, country churches, and country stores have become almost non-existent and small towns and villages provided fewer business services for the remaining rural populations.

The businessmen of all of the towns of the Valley have always been active in attracting and establishing businesses in the area. During pioneer times a great deal of emphasis was placed on securing rail transportation, while by 1960 much of the emphasis was placed on establishment of small farm-related manufacturing plants in the area.

The capital investment in equipment and land necessary to operate a farm successfully has become large enough to discourage attempts to begin farm operations without extensive financial backing. No longer can a young man rent 80 or 160 acres and with a few pieces of equipment and a team of horses begin farming. By 1960 the trend to larger farms and fewer operators was accepted by the citizens of the area. Many rural young people were looking for opportunities outside farming for a life's work.

By 1960 a majority of the remaining farms in the Republican Valley were family-operated, prosperous, agricultural, businesses. The value of the family farm to all the rural and urban people of the area is obvious. The metamorphosis of the family farm in the Republican Valley of Kansas has resulted in much enlarged units, reduced labor needs, vast increases in capital requirements, and greater productivity. The small community of the Valley relates to the general change in the country.

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THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE FAMILY FARM IN THE REPUBLICAN VALLEY COUNTRY OF KANSAS: 1860 - 1960

by

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The status of agriculture in the United States was the subject of various studies by government and private agencies during the 1950's. All surveys of the problems confronting the American agricultural economy concurred in naming mechanization and improved methods of farming as forces allowing the production of over-abundant food and fiber with a greatly reduced labor force. The flood of agricultural products resulted in depressed prices and many small family farms suffered financial disaster while larger more efficient units continued to operate successfully.

The Republican Valley of Kansas is an area of five counties which is dependent on agriculture despite the aspirations of the pioneer settlers for industrial development. The decennial United States census figures showed that the population rocketed to its highest figure in twenty years, 1870 to 1890. Since 1890 a slow steady decline in population has been the trend in the Valley. Even before the application of science and technology to the farm business the area could not effectively support the population of the late nineteenth century. With little economic development in non-agricultural enterprise a decline in population was inevitable.

Contemporary accounts and later local histories all provided detailed accounts of the activities of the pioneers who settled and developed the area. These accounts emphasized the struggles of the original land holders to establish profitable farming in the subhumid prairie environment. The period of time from 1870 to 1890 covered the complete conversion of virgin prairie to cultivated farms and small communities. During these years basic social, political, and business institutions were established. From 1890 to World War I, the citizens of the Valley were content to live with the established pattern and to strive to improve the way of life without changes in the basic forms.

The technological changes in methods of farming which followed World War I were adopted quite rapidly by the farmers. Local citizens were more reluctant to change other patterns of rural life. The businesses of small communities, the rural churches, and schools were gradually eliminated if they could not be adapted to changed conditions. The depression years of the 1930's brought subsidies to the farmers but did not slow the over production of crops. The social changes in rural life did not keep pace with the changed methods of farming during these years. Following World War II evolution in agricultural methods accelerated and the whole pattern of rural life both on the farm and in the small towns had to adapt to the changes. By 1960 farming had become a business operated in the country much as any business was conducted in town.

United States Census statistics, publications of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture and the State Historical Society provided material for the study of the growth and change in the Republican Valley. Publications of the extension division and the Agricultural Experiment Stations of Kansas State University provided material relating to farming in Kansas. Published materials devoted to events and trends in agriculture during the 1930's were not readily available for study. Authorities concerned with the position of the family farm by 1960 had offered such widely divergent views as those presented by Edward Higbee, Farms And Farmers In An Urban Age, and John H. Davis and Kenneth Hinshaw, Farmer In A Business Suit. Higbee believed the family farm was completely outdated and thought many inefficient units had been retained unnecessarily by Federal Government Programs, while Hinshaw and Davis believed the social efficiency of such units made it worth while to institute programs to prolong their existence.

In 1960 the majority of farms in the Republican Valley were family units larger and more efficient than those described by Davis and Hinshaw as socially valuable. These farms were smaller than the units Edward Higbee advocated for efficient production. Census statistics indicated that the farms were growing larger but were still family businesses.